

REFLEXÕES SOBRE O ESTÁGIO ANN DEMEULEMEESTER

REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERNSHIP: ANN DEMEULEMEESTER

ESTÁGIO ACADÉMICO DE NATUREZA PROFISSIONAL | PROFESSIONAL INTERNSHIP OF ACADEMIC NATURE

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~~ACKNOWLEDGMENTS~~

To all my family, in particular Joana and Luís.

To everybody working at BVBA 32, with specially to Krystyna and Jolien who always answered my questions, Céline, for being such a funny girl, Astrid for her sense of responsibility and positivity, Liesbeth for being like a mother, and Grace for her sweetness. Also to Samira, Ann, Lisa, Raf, Iris and Sara for all the good moments and guidance.

To Tanja and Katharina for all the crazyness and companionship.

To Anne Chapelle and Ann Demeulemeester for sponsoring my work with materials.

To Professor Inês Simões for her support, guidance and friendship.

To Ricardo Pereira for his last minute revision.

Thank you very much.

~~ABSTRACT~~

Within Fashion Design's field of studies, there was found the need to experience at first hand the internal workings of an already established fashion design company. For this reason, she applied and was accepted as an intern from the 4th February 2013 to the 12th of July, 2013 at Ann Demeulemeester. This enabled her to come into direct contact with the technical part of a collection.

There was the possibility to learn more about: the use and manipulation of fabrics, manufacturing and how the process of prototyping a collection works, fittings, technical finishings, archive collections and its organization, press requests, working with prints, making handcrafted books, how a showroom and stock sale work, amongst many other things. There was also the opportunity to accompany the technical department team and the designer to Paris at the end of the seasons to assist backstage at the show and to organize the showroom.

Research was conducted beforehand, concerning the designer and her work since the beginning of her activity.

This is a critical and detailed report about how the company is structured and how it works, based on the whole experience, registered in a diary.

Keywords: Ann, Demeulemeester, fashion, process, collection.

~~RESUMO~~

Dentro do campo de estudos de Design de Moda, foi constatada a necessidade de experimentar, na primeira pessoa, o funcionamento de uma empresa de design de moda já estabelecida. Por isso, ela candidatou-se e foi aceite como estagiária, de 04 de Fevereiro de 2013 a 12 de Julho de 2013, na empresa Ann Demeulemeester. Houve a possibilidade de estar em contato direto com a parte técnica de uma coleção.

Aprendeu-se mais sobre: o uso e manipulação de tecidos, fabricação e como funciona o processo de prototipagem das peças de uma coleção, acessórios, acabamentos técnicos, coleções de arquivos e sua organização, solicitações de imprensa, trabalho com padrões, fazer livros artesanais, como um showroom e stock sale funcionam, entre muitas outras coisas. Houve também a oportunidade de acompanhar a equipa do departamento técnico e da designer a Paris no final das estações para ajudar nos bastidores do desfile e para organizar o showroom.

Foi feita uma pesquisa prévia sobre a designer e seu trabalho desde o início da sua atividade.

No presente trabalho é elaborado um relatório crítico e detalhado sobre como a empresa está estruturada e como funciona, com base em toda a experiência da aluna, registrada num diário.

Palavras-chave: Ann, Demeulemeester, moda, processo, coleção.



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I ~~INTRODUCTION~~

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to show how important it is for a Master's Degree student in fashion design to work as an intern. It was felt that the challenge level in the BA and particularly in the Fashion Design Master's Degree that I was enrolled in was low. Thus I felt the urge to seek more knowledge in a direct contact with the industry seeing there was a lack in my course of studies concerning contact with the aforementioned fashion industry.

Because of this increasing urge, a resume and a link to my online portfolio was submitted to the Belgian brand Ann Demeulemeester (as well as to five or six other brands), a renowned fashion designer. I was accepted as an intern from the 4th February 2013 to the 12th of July, 2013. This granted me the opportunity to come in direct contact with the technical part of building a collection where the connection is made between the design and the pattern departments. It is in this department that the process of developing a collection takes part; thus, more was learnt about the use and manipulation of fabrics, manufacturing and how the process of prototyping a collection works (two of the most important manufacturers for the company were visited), fittings, technical finishings, archive collections and its organization, press requests, working with prints, making handcrafted books, how a showroom and stock sales work, amongst many other things. It was also an extremely valuable experience to accompany the technical department team and the designer to Paris at the end of the seasons (Women's Fall-Winter 2013/2014 and Men's Spring/Summer 2014) to assist backstage at the show and to organize the showroom.

A thorough research was carried out beforehand concerning Ann Demeulemeester's work since the beginning of her activity. It was essential to arrive at the knowledge about who Ann Demeulemeester is and what kind of work is developed in her atelier, to know the background and concept of the brand beforehand. Now, with a new and fresh view on the company, it was possible to acknowledge things that aren't evident in the media or that are not as important to a normal reader as it is to somebody who really wants to understand how everything works inside a fashion design company.

To prove the importance of everything that was learnt during the internship, a detailed report was conceived about how the company is structured and how it works and the most relevant tasks performed during the internship. To this end, and as support, the activities were registered in a diary.

Something that was not expected but happened during the internship, which reflects the importance of stepping out of one's comfort zone, was creating new relations with people who have very similar tastes but completely different backgrounds.

With this internship, I obtained and consolidated knowledge that may provide support to my integration in the fashion industry. It is considered that this experience will be an asset for a constantly changing resume and a very valid form to develop new skills and improve aptitudes.

TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Reflexões sobre o Estágio: Ann demeulemeester

Reflections on the internship: Ann Demeulemeester

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The general aim of this internship was to prove the importance of a practical experience period within the program of studies of either the Bachelor's degree or the Master's, showing everything that was learnt as a valuable asset and starting point for somebody who wants to proceed with a fashion design career.

As specific objectives, the aim was to improve interdisciplinary skills, as well as to learn new working methods in fashion design; to explore new subfields in this area, to become more responsible and to improve a curricular level.

There was the possibility to understand how the process of developing a collection works and how a medium sized company is structured, from creating to selling a collection. With this knowledge, it is possible to structure a new company from scratch, always having everything in mind, from the most important things to the things that seem insignificant but have a lot of value when it comes to organization.

Another objective is to help anyone who wants to enroll on an internship program by giving advice. In fact, I have already been contacted by people abroad who wished to learn more about the experience. Mentioning the internship on my portfolio website is already a small thing that has been moving people towards new internship experiences.

Since my return, I have been involved in a new project where everything learnt during the internship will be applied.

QUESTION OF RESEARCH

During the Bachelor degree and Master degree there were not a lot of opportunities to elaborate projects that approximate the students to the fashion industry. The internship possibility in a famous fashion brand is faced as the culmination of a process where theory and practice were interlinked. The five and a half months of internship, conclude in the best way an academic development.

The Master's degree is therefore concluded in the form of the internship and this project, where the most important aspects of the company are described and where there are made reflections not only about the importance of an internship but also about the working methods used in the company and the validity of the subjects studied during the Bachelor and Master's degree.

It was essential to learn and analyze the history and working methods of the company before the internship started. A whole new subject was found during the internship, a very essential one that was not taught during university years: How a company works, how to start a fashion business, how to develop it and what are the keys to keep it working.

How are students going to be able to start a structured company by themselves without any basis on the matter? Is it also important to learn it as a subject in university or is it better to learn it via an internship?



II ANN DEMEULEMEESTER BACKGROUND OF THE BRAND

ANN DEMEULEMEESTER

BACKGROUND

Ann Demeulemeester (Image 1) was born in Waregem, Antwerp, in 1959 (Kaupp 1991). She grew up in Flanders and always had the unquestionable support of her parents, who dedicated themselves to chicory culture (Middleton 1995).



Image 1 Ann Demeulemeester, photographed by Patrick Robyn, 1978, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.tumblr.com/tagged/patrick%20robyn>>.

Ann Demeulemeester (Image 1) was born in Waregem, Antwerp, in 1959 (Kaupp 1991). She grew up in Flanders and always had the unquestionable support of her parents, who dedicated themselves to the cultivation of chicory (Middleton 1995).

At the age of 15 she left her parents' home and started to study painting in Bruges. During her stay there, Ann dedicated herself to the study of the female body, a subject that amazed her, where she dedicated her time to drawing naked bodies and came to understand the importance of clothes as an expression of the individual personality, as communication (Borka 1997).

It was her fascination about women and not any interest on fashion itself that took her to study fashion at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, in Antwerp, in 1978 (Borka 1997).

"In my experience most emotional moments coincide with the start of something like the moment I get an idea and just know it is going to work. As soon as I discovered the power clothes have, the impact they can have on your feelings, your identity and self image, I decided to make a career of it. The study of how clothes contain and convey emotions was the starting point for my work and is still its essence."
(Ann Demeulemeester in Beirendonck & Derycke 2001).

Her project teacher, Madame Prijot, was a very traditional woman, severe and inflexible. It was the Punk Era (Image 2) and the students wanted to present innovative and bold projects that were frequently rejected by this teacher. Prijot believed in Coco Chanel (Image 3) and in the

classic shapes in fashion. This fashion design course was directed by Haute-Couture believers. It was these students who determined the turning point in the methods taught at that same school. Due to the severity of the teaching system, the students developed very strong and creative personalities because they always had to defend their ideas. (Betts 1997).



Image 2 The 70's, Punk movement, Hank Grebe, accessed on 04.01.2013, <<http://www.mediaspin.com/dancingpunks.html>>.



Image 3 Coco Chanel (reclining), Horst P. Horst, accessed on 04.01.2013, <<http://www.jacksonfineart.com/horst-p-horst-368.html>>.

While looking for a place that would be suitable for a photo shoot location, Ann and Patrick (her husband) found a beautiful house (Images 4 and 5). As soon as they got inside it they felt a strong connection with the place and the urge to live there. "Sometimes I think I have a guardian angel, because I find I'm attracted to someone or something and then it becomes part of my life.", says the designer in an interview by Mower (2007). They got in touch with the daughter of the artist Rene Guiette (who ordered the house to Le Corbusier¹ (1887-1965) in 1925), the owner of the building back then, asking if it would be possible to rent the place. On the next day, she contacted them and told them about a dream she had had the night before, which she considered as a sign that she should sell the house to them. Demeulemeester and Patrick had gathered some money that that had been given to them by their grandparents and although this amount didn't cover the value of the house it was accepted by the artist's daughter (Mower 2007).

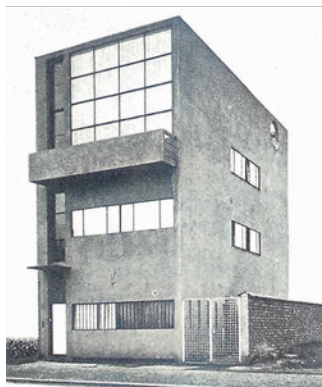


Image 4 Guiette House, Le Corbusier's project, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?p=48181013>>.



Image 5 House and atelier of the designer, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.djibnet.com/photo/archeonet/maison-guiette-antwerpen-2239047894.html>>.

¹ Architect, designer, urbanist and writer, born in Switzerland, pioneer in design studies, dedicated himself to provide better life conditions to people who lived in overloaded cities.

Another example of the couple's luck was that the centenary of Le Corbusier was to be celebrated that same year. As there recently purchased home was the only house designed by him in Belgium, the government decided to pay for the reconstruction work. Some years later they bought the land next to it where they constructed an annex with three floors (Image 5), projected by Georges Baines (n. 1925), an apprentice of Le Corbusier, which was to be used as an atelier. The house was decorated by Patrick, who included various works made by iconic artist Man Ray (1890-1976). Demeulemeester says that her predisposition to create beautiful things improves when she's surrounded by equally beautiful things (Dombrowicz & Renaux 1992).

Nowadays, Victor (Image 6), the son of the designer is living in the same house, while Ann and Patrick retired to the county side not so far away from the company (but also not that close), in a place where there is a line between work and private life.

In 1983, Ann won the annual Belgian prize awarded to the best designer called Golden Spindle (Kaupp 1991).

During the next 5 years, Ann and her husband worked to save money (Mower 2007). She chose a very austere Belgian brand because she always liked the most basic forms in garments for both sexes and there she learnt the secrets of cutting and sewing (Holgate 2007). This money was later spent on fabrics for Demeulemeester's first collection (Mower 2007): "We weren't afraid. No guts, no glory!" (Mower 2007).

She founded her company in 1985 (Derycke 1999), a partnership with her husband named BVBA "32" (<http://www.32.be/>)². This was also the year when she fell pregnant; it was a personal choice (Image 6) because Demeulemeester was afraid that as soon as she started to become too absorbed in her work she wouldn't have time to think about this matter of great importance to her (Haase 2006). She started to present her collections in 1987 (as audiovisual exhibitions, in a gallery situated at number 9, Place des Voges) (Image 7). These collections were considered depressing and mournful, but for that reason she made the difference. Therefore she obtained a distinguished place among other designers, who tried to be more commercial and renew their identities in every season in order to create or follow tendencies (Betts, 1997).



Image 6 "Our son victor", by Patrick Robyn, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://cotonblanc.tumblr.com/post/3899229402/ann-demeulemeester-our-son-victor-photography>>.



Image 7 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 1987-88 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.

² "Chronology", <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

It was this first collection that determined the designer's future. In 1987, Ann and five other students that were in the same class (Marina Yee, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Bikkembergs, Walter Van Beirendonck e Dirk Van Saene) rented a van to go and participate in London Fashion Week. Due to their irreverence and because there were no famous Belgian fashion designers, the six made a great impact. Because their names were so difficult to pronounce, they were referred to as The Antwerp Six (Image 8). Ann received her first order (the most important from Charivari, in New York, which promoted the work of new conceptual fashion designers) and met a lot of people in the fashion industry. Because she didn't have money to pay for the production of what was ordered, she had to ask her new clients for the money in advance. (Middleton 1995).

Ann quickly refined her taste, using more luxurious and complex fabrics such as satin, leather and *dévoré* velvet (Images 9 to 12). Her pattern making methods evolved into more daring shapes. The invitations to her show became more and more craved by fashion professionals and lovers (Betts 1997).



Image 8 Antwerp Six: Ann Demeulemeester, Dirk Van Saene, Marina Yee, Dries Van Noten, Walter Van Beirendonck and Dirk Bikkembergs, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.wwd.com/eye/fashion/moment-54-the-antwerp-six-3346304>>.



Image 9 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1988 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 10 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1989 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history>>.



Image 11 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 1989-90 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 12 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1991 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history>>.



Image 13 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1992 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 14 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 1993-94 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 15 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1994 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 16 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1995 collection, accessed on 07.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.

It was in 1992 that she took the leap from showing her work in exhibitions to participating in Paris Fashion Week (Images 13 to 16). That same year she achieved second place on the international list of fashion designers from the magazine *Journal du Textile* (Borka 1997).

Demeulemeester started creating Men's collections (Images 17 e 18) in the Summer of 1996 (Derycke 1999), but they started being presented at the same time as the women's collection and not at the regular men's shows dates (Frankel 2002).



Images 17 and 18 Ann Demeulemeester men's collections retrospective, from 1996 to 2009, photographs by Erik Madigan Heck, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.selectism.com/2009/06/25/jc-report-demeulemeesters-male-retrospective/>>.

"It is wonderful if you can walk on this very fine line and study what you can do for both sexes, to take them away from the roles that history makes them play. Obviously there are masculine and feminine elements with both. Also, it has so much more life if you show on both men and women. To me, it is not about clothes but about people. It is much more real, more normal, if they can work together" (Ann Demeulemeester in Frankel 2002).

Ann explains to what kind of men she creates these collections for (Images 19 to 22): “He’s not afraid of being fragile or eccentric. For me, it is a great challenge to bring this fragility into the clothes, to design the patterns in such a way that it becomes tangible. Fragility is a secret weapon that I equip men with. In reality it means strength” (Haase 2006).



Image 19 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2006, Men’s Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 20 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2006-07, Men’s Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 21 Patti Smith for Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2006-07, Men’s Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 22 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2008, Men’s Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.

“I work for men that I would love to meet, somebody who I could fall in love with, someone who intrigues me. Then I make him my prince”, “I’m not interested in the celebrity hype. My client is not a fashion victim, but someone who chooses what he wants, someone with individuality” (Ann Demeulemeester in Marsh 2010).

During Richardson’s interview in 1999, Demeulemeester’s shop (Images 23 to 29), in a building over a century old, was still under construction. However it already had black painted ceilings, walls ready to be covered with cream teal, big fitting rooms with a view to a wild garden. “It is going to be wild and romantic”, said Patrick, “I want people who don’t have money not to feel pressure, lots of shops are like art galleries, but to me an art gallery is a place where creativity is no longer alive – we wanted the place to feel a bit like an artist’s studio. Not sleek, not finished, our place”. They had also planned to place a big pigeon cage on the top floor of the shop.



Image 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 Various perspectives of Ann Demeulemeester shop, Antwerp, Bart Ven Leuven.

“It is a step further to create the shop in a way that people understand me better. You are a journalist, you can see the show, you have much more information than a client who comes into a shop and sees only a hanger with a piece of clothing. People in the street only see pictures in a magazine and a translation from stylists. It is not only about clothing, it is a way of living, it is a way of thinking. If we design a piece of clothing we can easily create a table or a lighter with the same mind. If you ask me to design a calculator, I will design an Ann Demeulemeester calculator. If I make a shop, I want to make an Ann Demeulemeester shop” (Ann Demeulemeester in Richardson 1999).

The shop is situated in front of the Fine Arts Museum (Museum voor Schone Kunsten), in a square renewed by the same architect who designed the shop interiors, Paul Robbrecht (Richardson 1999).

“The store is a place where things still have to happen, where action still has to be created, like an unwritten page or an empty canvas. Guessing what might happen there, is precisely one of the areas of speculation where architecture can be involved, like the uncertain foundation of an hypothesis. You should grant this type of open-mindedness to Ann Demeulemeester’s store. We believe it will be an enriching experience for all who enter.” (Robbrecht).

In 2004, Ann sells part of the company to her business manager Anne Chapelle³. Ann Demeulemeester (as a brand) was, until recently, divided in three companies: one that is in charge of her collections, another which is responsible for the Antwerp Shop and the last one which supports and manages new designer’s businesses like Haider Ackermann (Haase 2006).

³ Alcalá, N 2011, “Belgian Investor Anne Chapelle Is Fashion’s Best Kept Secret”, accessed on 06.08.2013 < <http://www.blackbookmag.com/fashioneer-1.110/belgian-investor-anne-chapelle-is-fashion-s-best-kept-secret-1.39384> >

Until around this year, as told by the head of the technical department, the company had only one computer and the technical *fiches* (technical forms) were written by hand by the person who had the prettiest hand writing.

It is also at that time that the company takes the next step, expanding the area of the company, creating a new archive and new offices and ateliers.

The designer finally separates women's from men's collections (Image 30 to 33), presenting it at the Paris Fashion Week Men's shows schedules with the collection presented in 2005 for Spring/Summer 2006. (GQ Style 2006)

"In the end, I've had to become an adult and fit into the system" (Ann Demeulemeester in GQ Style 2006).



Image 30 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2008-09, Men's Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 31 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2009, Men's Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 32 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2011, Men's Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.



Image 33 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2011-12, Men's Collection, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/history.html>>.

This step brought more value to the business but forced Ann to adapt to a new way of working. Until then, both collections were designed simultaneously and now, due to the different presentation schedules men's collections are designed before women's (GQ Style 2006).

"In the past, I always worked freely, if I felt like making a man's jacket in the morning and a woman's in the afternoon, it was fine. But now, we concentrate first on the men and then on the women" (Ann Demeulemeester in GQ Style 2006).

In May 2006, Ann opens a new shop in Hong Kong (Image 34) and another one in Tokyo (Image 35)⁴: “The Japanese are less blasé than the Europeans, when they like something, they go wild for it, ‘Amazing! I want to buy everything!’ I even had to sign autographs. In Autumn, we want to open a new shop in Hong Kong.” (Ann Demeulemeester in Haase 2006). The Ann Demeulemeester jewelry line is also launched in the same year.

A new opening of a shop in Seoul, South Korea follows in 2007 (Image 36)⁵.



Image 34 Ann Demeulemeester shop, Hong Kong, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

Image 35 Ann Demeulemeester shop, Tokyo, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

Image 36 Ann Demeulemeester shop, Seoul, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

In Fromont’s (2007) interview, Ann says that, to her disappointment, she became incapable of carrying out all the design work by herself. At this stage, she was designing women’s and men’s collections as well as shoes and jewelry. She prepared assistants whom she gradually gave more responsibility to. Until then, the designer proudly and single-handedly coordinated everything related to the collections as well as the following steps (production, fashion shows, preparing the sales, determining prices, shippings, among other things).

Due to her work’s uniformity, there were a lot of clothes that made her collections even more popular and that are still very up to date. To satisfy a lot of clients’ requests who requested re-editions of items from previous seasons, the brand created a new label in 2008: Collection Blanche (Image 37)⁶.

⁴ “Chronology”, accessed on 05.12.2012, < <http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html> >

⁵ “Chronology”, accessed on 05.12.2012, < <http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html> >

⁶ “Chronology”, accessed on 05.12.2012, < <http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html> >.

ANN DEMEULEMEESTER

(collection blanche)

A white canvas
Blank
Timeless
Open

A white label
Crossing time
Clothes...

They were once in a Ann Demeulemeester collection
Those pieces... we still like
to wear
to have
to have again
Still requested
Selected from the archives
of 20 years Ann Demeulemeester

available in Ann Demeulemeester stores, selected department stores and specialty stores

Image 37 "Collection Blanche", Ann Demeulemeester, accessed on 08.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

In 2011, Ann developed a capsule collection sold online at www.thecorner.com (Images 38 and 39). This collection consisted of four unisex garments: a top, a vest, a pair of trousers and a bag. A short promotional video was edited, in a very poetic style, so familiar to Ann Demeulemeester, by the artist Erik Madigan Heck (b. 1983)⁷.



Image 38 and 39 Ann Demeulemeester collection in collaboration with the online shop www.thecorner.com, photographs by Erik Madigan Heck, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.thestyleexaminer.com/2011/11/ann-demeulemeesters-exclusive-designs.html#.UO2AEKy-euK>>.

⁷ "Ann Demeulemeester's Exclusive Designs for Thecorner.com", accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.thestyleexaminer.com/2011/11/ann-demeulemeesters-exclusive-designs.html#.UO2AEKy-euK>>.

ANN DEMEULEMEESTER

(collection grise)

 C
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Image 40 "Collection Grise", Ann Demeulemeester, accessed on 06.08.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

In the beginning of 2013, the brand Ann Demeulemeester creates a new label named Collection Grise with the same spirit as Collection Blache but more classic and only for men. This collection is presented at the same time as men's collections and Blanche.

In June 2013 it is also officially revealed that Anne Chapelle has decided to split Ann Demeulemeester from Haider Ackermann, a brand that also belonged to BVBA 32 for several years. She will thus maintain her share in both companies separately⁸. From now on the two companies will no longer be ruled by the same standards. The Ann Demeulemeester brand can be considered as a "mother" for this company as well as few others that been in the hands of Anne Chapelle, because she had to find her own way in the fashion industry and the others learnt everything from her experience.

⁸ Alexander, E 2013, "Haider Ackermann and Ann Demeulemeester split ", accessed on 06.08.2013, <<http://www.vogue.co.uk/news/2013/06/04/haider-ackermann-and-ann-demeulemeester-split-from-bvba-32>>.

WORKING METHODS AND INSPIRATION

Ann goes back to the original construction of clothes (Image 41), manipulating them (Kaupp 1991). She intends to solve problems that she finds in existing normal pieces of clothing. She puts these problems in the form of questions like: how to layer one coat on top of the other, keeping the elegance of only one jacket and fitting them together in a perfect way, without any discomfort points? How can a woman wear men's clothing and still maintain her sensuality? (Richardson 1999).



Image 41 Ann in her atelier, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://bostonroll.tumblr.com/post/9278150246/ann-demeulemeester-in-her-le-corbusier-studio>>.

"Sometimes I pose a question to myself and it can be very inspiring. In finding the answer I discover a new idea. It is not always about the detail" (Ann Demeulemeester in Richardson 1999).

"I can remake the same prototype ten times if it is necessary, until it is exactly the way I want it to be."⁹ (Ann Demeulemeester in Kaupp 1991).

The designer communicates through pure and limited lines; her work philosophy is based on the expression "Design-and-not-decoration". She explores profoundly silhouettes, basic body shapes, in every possibility. One of the most interesting factors in her creations is the "false" simplicity of the garments, if they are analyzed more carefully, a very well thought and thorough composition can be found. (Derycke 1999).

⁹ L.T. "Je fais refaire dix fois une toile s'il la faut, jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit exactement ce que je veux."

In her interview done by Todd (1997), the designer explains how her wish to create garments with attitude and movement makes her manipulate the fabrics so that they fall in a different way, very subtly (Image 42).



Image 42 The designer draping a garment, to manipulate how the fabric reacts, photograph by Kevin Davies, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/assets/interviews/id.pdf>>.

“In my atelier we start with the yarn: the fabric, it is dyeing, the washing... Because this takes a lot of time, we are obliged to start there. We create fabrics that we love, without knowing what to do with them. Then, because there is not only one correct way to manipulate each fabric, we try to find the best way to use it”¹⁰ (Ann Demeulemeester in Fromont 2007).

Demeulemeester is considered a deconstructive designer; because in order to understand a garment, she has to destroy it first, putting it together again with its structure (seams, hems, zippers) completely or partially visible. Shapes become more important than color. Deconstruction is the constant search for a sense (Loschek 2009): “Traditional orders and any kind of conventions are torn down; aesthetic habits with respect to body proportions and the criteria of beauty are questioned.” (Loschek 2009).

The designer is incredibly persistent and positive. After drawing something, the patterns that match her idea perfectly can take weeks until they’re finished, but because she firmly believes in her ideas she pushes those who work with her to new and unexplored limits (Todd 1997). She usually tries most of the prototypes and Patrick tries the ones for men’s collections to make sure that only the garments they feel comfortable with move on to the next phase (Middleton 1995). Everything that Demeulemeester wears is from her own brand (Frankel 2002): ““What I like to wear, I do myself, I don’t know how that sounds, but it is the truth. My life is so mixed with my profession that I don’t know where I begin or my work ends” (Ann Demeulemeester in Frankel 2002).

¹⁰ L.T. “Dans mon atelier, nous commençons avec le fil: le tissage, la teinture, le lavage... Comme cela prend énormément de temps, nous sommes obligés de commencer par là. Nous créons des étoffes que nous aimons, sans savoir ce que nous en ferons. Ensuite, comme il n’y a selon moi qu’une manière juste d’utiliser chaque tissu, il s’agit alors de trouver la bonne.”

“I make a drawing, but then I have the problem – ooh-la-la – of how to turn that into a piece of clothing! I always try to find a solution. When I believe in something, I will never drop it. I will be mad about it, I will be sick about it, everyone will throw the patterns at my head! But I will not stop – I think there’s always a solution” (Ann Demeulemeester in Todd 1997).

She compares herself to a writer or a painter. Her favorite writers are Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) and Alan Ginsberg (1926-1997). According to Borka (1997), she has these tastes due to her involvement in (in her own words) “Communicating emotions. Revealing something of a woman in a state of desire. Desire for love, enjoyment, peace, and liberation...” (Borka 1997).

Proof of this emotion that Ann talks about is her quote in Paillié’s interview (2008), when she speaks about the jewels she creates:

“It is not difficult to create an umbrella or a glass. Of course, one needs to know the technique. But the older I get, the more I know that I have my own vocabulary. Diamonds – white, red or black – I have looked at them like an enchanted child who gazes at a star. And I place them



Image 43 Use of color: Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2008-09 ,Men’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2008MEN-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 44 Use of color: Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2009, Women’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2009RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 45 Use of color: Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2012-13, Women’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2012RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 46 Use of color: Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/summer 2013, Men’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2013MEN-ADEMEULE>>.

freely, in a glass medallion. The chains of aged silver bring me back to my grandmothers' jewellery. It is about emotion. And that's what my jewels are about. Chains have the connotation of something locked in. And so I give them love while using their strength. My jewels are poor and luxurious at the same time" (Ann Demeulemeester in Paillié, E 2008).

Ann uses expressions like "starting from scratch" as if she was a painter, in order to always start her work from "virginal" white: "I go back to the year zero for every item of clothing. And when I use red, I have to have the feeling that I invented the color myself" (Images 43 to 46) (Ann Demeulemeester in Borka 1997).

Her favorite colors are black and white and she uses them in every collection (Borka 1997). Ann uses black and white as somebody who perceives a black and white photograph or film, they reveal only the essential shapes, without color as a "decoration" (Images 47 to 50) (Derycke 1999): "If you look at a black and white picture, everything you need to explain a silhouette, a contrast, a mood, is there. It is the essence" (Ann Demeulemeester in Frankel 2002).



Image 47 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2007-08, Men's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2007MEN-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 48 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2009, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2009RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 49 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2012, Men's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2012MEN-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 50 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2013, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2013RTW-ADEMEULE>>.

“Black is the essence, and it doesn’t exist without white. I draw in black and white to obtain the shape’s purity and so I don’t get distracted. The color would be superfluous. All is said. Black is a magic color, profound and poetic. There is not only one black, there is a family of blacks. This tone can have 1000 different connotations in different materials, brittenesses, structures, shadows that surround it... It is a whole vocabulary. A black which has nothing to say is a dead black” (Ann Demeulemeester in Fromont 2007) (Image 51 to 54).



Image 51 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2008-09, Men’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2008MEN-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 52 Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2009-10, Women’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2009RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 53 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2010, Men’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2010MEN-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 54 Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2012, Women’s Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2012RTW-ADEMEULE>>.

When asked by Betts (1997) about designers who inspire her she becomes reluctant, although she names Peter Lindbergh¹¹ (b. 1944) (Image 55) as one of her favorite photographers and René Heyvaert¹² (1929-1984) as her favorite artist. She also refuses to name the famous brands that offered her a job as their head designer, as well as the manufacturer industries that wanted to work with her. The manufacturers, are chosen very carefully so that what they produce is as perfect as if she was, herself, making the clothes. Regarding the big brands that wanted to hire her, she says she feels flattered but she would not feel comfortable with the responsibility of having to “take care” of a brand which is not hers, besides her own brand. When Givenchy contacted her, Ann asked a friend what she would do with so much money. She feels in her element and everything she does gives her pleasure. She wouldn’t compromise her integrity in order to involve herself in more ambitious projects.

¹¹ German photographer, famous for his work for fashion magazines.

¹² Belgian architect and plastic artist.



Image 55 Ann Demeulemeester top, photograph by Peter Lindbergh, 2000, Vogue Italy, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.vogue.it/en/encyclo/designers/d/ann-demeulemeester>>.

She reveals to Frankel (2002) that what makes her uncomfortable when talking about other designers is:

“Perhaps I should say fashion in general is silly. But then everything is, in general. If you talk about music in general, it is silly, about magazines, in general, they’re silly. Things aren’t interesting if you level them. It is the voice that’s interesting, I don’t look at other people’s work because I don’t want to be distracted by their ideas. On the other hand, I’m interested in every designer whose soul can be found in their work. If they have an idea about who they are and can express that in their work, then I can appreciate it. It doesn’t matter if it is not my style or to my personal taste, because if it is real and done in an original way then it is interesting” (Ann Demeulemeester in Frankel 2002).

Ann tries to promote Belgian services. In the beginning it was complicated because the services she needed were only specialized in mass production. According to a story told during the internship, Ann had to beg the first manufacturer she worked with to make an exception so she could produce less quantities. The owner of the manufacturer didn’t accept to produce what she asked for because the quantities were so low. When she left the building the owner’s son came to her and told her he would produce her things in secret. Now the son is the owner of this company and Ann still works with it. With the intensification of mass industries in China, it is Ann and Dries Van Noten who keep the Belgian manufacturers alive. The same happened to a shoe maker in Italy who worked in a garage and has his own manufacturer, where he works for her exclusively (Mower 2007).

In an interview by Renaux (2004), the designer states that what moves her, more than her love for work, is the sense of duty that she imposes to herself in each season (Image 56). The idea of compromising herself in a long term with a contract makes her nervous. She defends the importance of keeping an open mind. She works very intensively and it consumes her whole life and energy.



Image 56 Ann Demeulemeester after the Spring/Summer 1993 show, photography by John Van Hasse, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://stylezeitgeist.com/forums/showthread.php?p=317849>>.

In her work she tries to unite ethics and aesthetic, always maintaining her honesty. In respect to the human body, Ann knows that everybody is different, even if some look alike. Because of that she asks various people to try out her creations. The body parts that interest her the most are the shoulders, waist and hips, she says (Salgado 2001).

Demeulemeester's creations are usually considered gothic (Marsh 2010) or androgynous (Todd 1997), connotations that she rejects. When it comes to those who consider the creations gothic, they do it with prejudice and lack of knowledge in general, being their only defense the regular use of black. This is wrong because a collection goes beyond color, as the designer claims. As for androgyny she reflects: "I'm always conflicting between masculine and feminine." (Richardson 1999).

"I'm not trying to make a woman look masculine; I just think that women have masculine elements. A woman is not a Barbie doll, and if you show a woman as a woman is, with her feminine and masculine elements, then all of a sudden it is called 'androgynous'. For me, it is the idea of balance in human nature that makes creating interesting" (Ann Demeulemeester in Todd 1997).



Image 57 Fragility/Strength and Dark/Bright: Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2009-10, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/F2009RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 58 Heavy/Light: Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2013, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2013RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 59 Opaque/Transparent: Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2012, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2012RTW-ADEMEULE>>.



Image 60 Naked/Covered: Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2010-11, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://www.style.com/fashionshows/review/S2010RTW-ADEMEULE>>.

In addition to her interest in the human being and its antagonistic duality, other dualities can be identified in her collections: modern and romantic, fragility and strength, dark and bright (Image 57), heavy and light (Image 58), opaque and transparent (Image 59) (Todd 1997), naked and covered (Image 60) (Loschek 2009). In her imaginary mythological evocations are recurrent, as well as fantasy and ethereal beings, full of mystic, divinities of the woods from Scandinavian culture or even Amazones, warrior goddesses and wild girls (Dombrowicz & Renaux 1992).

Ann is also fascinated by feathers (Images 61 to 64). She uses them in many accessories and garments. The materialization of this inspiration in her life is the circle of feathers made by her husband (Image 6 and 71). They represent movement caused by the wind, without destiny (Borka 1997).

As Derycke (1999) mentions: the general impression of Ann's collections is always introspective, poetic, but at the same time there is always an element of danger that stands out beyond the cold simplicity. They are simple in the same way as a knife. Serious but never severe, meticulous but experimental, strong but always sensual. Elegant with a big amount of *rock'n'roll*.

In Richardson's (1999) interview, the designer says that "Our theme is our life. Our background is a big mix in our head of what we like and what we don't like", to what Patrick adds: "From a very early age you start creating like a treasure box that you fill over the years with images and you can use that treasure while you work." Sometimes Ann can also feels inspired by other ideas which she would never find in her common inspiration range. She takes them as her own and transforms them in a way so that they start being a part of her lexicon (Fromont 2007): "Sometimes I feel attracted to ideas that don't belong to my universe, but I deconstruct them and appropriate them in a way that in the end they totally belong to me"¹³ (Ann Demeulemeester in Fromont 2007).



Image 61 Head piece, Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2012-13, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://fuckyeahanndemeulemeester.tumblr.com/archive>>.



Image 62 Feather boa, Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 2008, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://fuckyeahanndemeulemeester.tumblr.com/archive>>.



Image 63 Feather applications, Ann Demeulemeester, Spring/Summer 1999, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://fuckyeahanndemeulemeester.tumblr.com/archive>>.

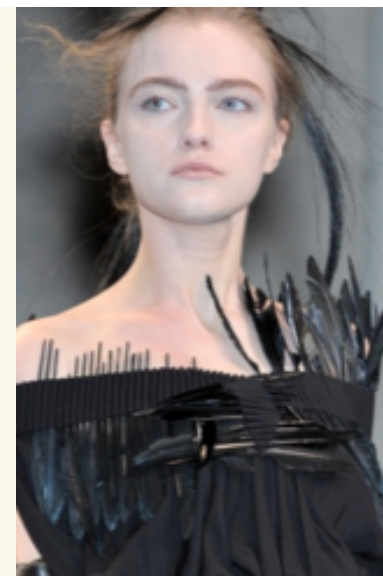


Image 64 Feather applications Ann Demeulemeester, Fall/Winter 2011-12, Women's Collection, accessed on 09.01.2013, <<http://fuckyeahanndemeulemeester.tumblr.com/archive>>.

¹³ L.T. "Je suis parfois attirée par des idées étrangères à mon univers, mais je les détourne et me les approprie de sorte qu'à la fin, elles m'appartiennent totalement."

“An atmosphere, a spirit, an idea... It is never visual, and even less connected to a design code. Having the impression of copying something that already exists; no, I have to have the feeling that I’m creating the future. Sometimes we believe that in fashion, everything is already said. But that’s false! There is the necessity to create garments as if they’ve never been created before”¹⁴ (Ann Demeulemeester in Fromont 2007).

She believes that the garments she creates tell the story of the ones who wear them, because every person’s style is unique and justifiable through the affection one feels about the garments one buys. In their turn, the same garments tell the story of Ann Demeulemeester. She never uses logos on the outside of the garments because she doesn’t believe in status (Betts 1997).

A creation is like a gift for the consumer, be it a piece of clothing, music or a painting, because it is a link of communication and comprehension between the artist and the ones that feel attracted to his creations (Derycke 1999): “A collection is like creating a gift for an anonymous person” (Ann Demeulemeester in Derycke 1999).

At the age of 16, she saw Patti Smith’s (b. 1946) album *Horses* (1975) (Image 65) in a shop and she was fascinated with the person in the cover (photographed then by her companion Robert Mapplethorpe (1946-1989)), when she listened to her music, full of energy, she felt even more captivated. Ann decided that one day she would meet this person: her soul-sister. In her first show, because it was part of her life, the designer chose Smith’s music to accompany the models’ pace. After the same show, she found the singer’s address and sent her a letter and a shirt as a gift in change of the “gift” that her music was (Holgate 2007).



Image 65 Patti Smith’s album *Horses*, photography by Robert Mapplethorpe, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.freecodesource.com/album-covers/B00273D5AA--patti-smith-horses-album-cover.html>>.

“I was in Detroit, raising my children, leading a pretty isolated life, and a package arrived, so exquisitely wrapped, with this beautiful shirt. And I thought, This person knows me, because it was as if I had designed that shirt myself, it was so perfect for me” (Patti Smith in Holgate 2007).

¹⁴ L.T. “Une atmosphère, un esprit, une idée... Ce n’est jamais visuel, encore moins lié à un code vestimentaire. J’aurais l’impression de copier quelque chose qui existe déjà; non, je dois avoir le sentiment que j’invente le futur. On croit parfois que dans la mode, tout a déjà été dit. Mais c’est faux! Il faut faire des vêtements comme ils n’ont jamais été faits.”

Since then they started communicating more frequently, and they finally met after 5 years, in Ostend, in the backstage of the singer's concert (Holgate 2007).



Image 66 Ann Demeulemeester and Patti Smith, in the backstage of a show, accessed on 10.01.2013, <http://www.nazcapictures.com/nv_photo.php?id_foto=12945&travel=&PHPSESSID=3d5a8d5173681149a2d8ae9f0e7d11a9>.

Image 67 Ann Demeulemeester and Patti Smith, photography by Annie Leibovitz, Fashion Rocks (Vogue USA supplement), 2007, accessed on 10.01.2013, <http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/assets/interviews/fashion_rocks.pdf>.

This artist's music is present in a lot of the designer's shows and sometimes the singer herself participates in them (Image 21 and 67).

Her musical taste reveals a fascination with experimental and alternative music, punk and rock, and her favorite bands or singers, besides Patti's are Sonic Youth (1981-2011), Nick Cave (b. 1957), Velvet Underground (1964-1973, 1990, 1992-1994 and 1996), Lou Reed (b. 1942), PJ Harvey (b. 1969) Their music is constantly playing in her atelier (Dombrowicz & Renaux 1992).

Even today, the designer feels surprised with the fact that these artists, who are her idols, know and appreciate her work (Jarcy 2011).

Ann has a big list of fans in the world of celebrities, such as Madonna (b. 1958), Courtney Love (b. 1964), Trent Reznor (b. 1965), singer in the band Nine Inch Nails since 1988, and most of the singers referenced above. They all have the same opinion about Demeulemeester's creations concerning the way they're cut: it fits their bodies perfectly (Middleton 1995). Grace Coddington (creative director in Vogue USA) is also a huge fan of Ann's work, and attends all of her shows and visits the showrooms personally. She also makes special requests for the magazine, asking for garments or accessories from archive collections (which proves Ann's collections are timeless and always in demand).

"That's the best compliment – when a woman tells me she loves wearing my clothes, that's what I'm working for – and only women can understand it. I never show something I haven't tried on myself. It can be very beautiful, but if I don't feel good in it, if I feel ridiculous, I can't put it in the collection. I have a big respect for women, and I don't want to make them look stupid or like dolls, you know?" (Ann Demeulemeester in Middleton 1995).

"My duty is to believe in beauty, hope and emotion and I want to show that in my work. That is my *raison d'être* (reason of being). If people say, when I'm dead, 'She was the one who added emotion to fashion,' I'd be very happy with that" (Ann Demeulemeester in Marsh 2010).

OTHER PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

In 1996 Ann was invited to participate in the first Florence Biannual, where the relations between fashion, visual arts, cinema, photography and history were explored in more than twenty locations with the participation of a lot of famous artists from different areas. Ann was called to create something to open the exhibition *New Persona/New Universe*, at the former Leopoldo train station. She steered away from the obvious and instead of creating a collection, she asked eighty friends for their rings. Among these friends there were, for example, Kim Gordon from Sonic Youth, who sent a band aid with the word intimacy and Nick Cave, who sent her a note saying "Dear Ann, nobody gets my ring and I mean nobody.", because he had promised a friend on his death bed, that he would always wear his ring. The result was a round wall with compartments at eye level where the rings were exposed. There one could find samples of friendship, fidelity, vulnerability, fragility (Borka 1997) (Images 68 to 70).



Image 68 Patrick Robyn's ring (Ann Demeulemeester's husband), Florence Biannual, 1996, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

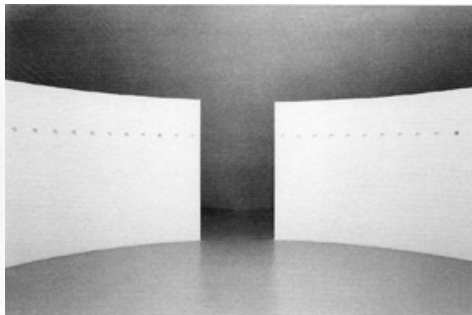


Image 69 Ann Demeulemeester's installation for the exhibition *New Persona/New Universe*, Florence Biannual, 1996, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/assets/interviews/facetten.pdf>>.

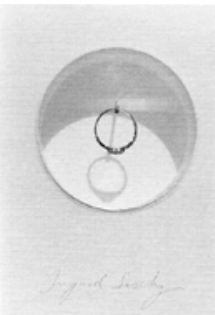


Image 70 Ingrid Sischy's ring, famous fashion and art magazines editor, Florence Biannual, 1996, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/assets/interviews/facetten.pdf>>.

In the same year, the designer was invited to create tables for the Belgian brand Bulo for the line Carte Blanche (Images 71 and 72). Ann was inspired by the basic shape of a table, covering it with white canvas (Borka 1997). With this table Ann won the Culture Award 1996¹⁵. These tables can be found in her atelier and showroom as well as other products from the same brand. Belgian products and services are extremely appreciated by the brand.

"We wanted to return to the primal form of the table. To what every child will produce when you ask it to draw a table. And at the same time we wanted to react against the fact that, with all its clever inventions, contemporary design ignores a concept like transience. It is the same in the fashion world, from which any model with wrinkles is doggedly excluded: all the furniture we have forced upon us has to create the illusion of a clean world. What we wanted was the opposite: something small, fragile and covered with a cloth that absorbs all the traces of the passage of time" (Ann Demeulemeester in Borka 1997).

¹⁵ "Chronology", accessed on 05.12.2012, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.



Images 71 and 72 Tables created by Ann Demeulemeester for the brand Bulo (Patrick Robyn's circle of feathers on the left picture), Carte Blanche line, 1996, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

Demeulemeester presents, in 1999, her ready-to-wear collection for Spring/Summer 2000, with a collaboration with Jim Dine (b. 1935), an American plastic artist (being the resulting garments: Poem of chalk (Image 73), Raven 1, Ravens and Hearts), and with Patti Smith, (resulting garments were called Woolgathering (Image 74)). In the same year she also creates, with her husband, a public bench for the same square where her shop is located, in Antwerp (Image 75)¹⁶.



Image 73 Poem of chalk, Demeulemeester collaboration with the artist Jim Dine, Spring/Summer 2000, presented in 1999, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.



Image 74 Woolgathering, Demeulemeester collaboration with the singer Patti Smith, Spring/Summer 2000, presented in 1999, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.



Image 75 Public bench created by Ann Demeulemeester and Patrick Robyn, 1999, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

¹⁶ "Chronology", accessed on 05.12.2012, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.

In 2001, various Belgian designers were invited to create a new garment for Virgin Mary for the exhibition *Autres Habits, Autres Façons*. This exhibition was split among several churches and the one attributed to Ann was Notre-Dame des Victoires et du Bonsecours, in Saint-André d'Anvers church (Image 76). When questioned about why she had accepted this challenge she says: "Because the Virgin is a woman who gives life, she's humble and transparent."¹⁷ (Paillié 2001).



Image 76 Notre-Dame des Victoires et du Bonsecours by Ann Demeulemeester, 2001, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/assets/interviews/figaro.pdf>>.

In 2004 she speaks about her project to create a perfume, which started around 1998. She says she's ready for it and she will create it when the time is right: "You could compare clothes without perfume to a show without music, or a woman with no scent. It is about reinforcing a universe by bringing something immaterial to it." (Ann Demeulemeester in Renaux 2004). Ann always wears a very strong perfume, leaving a lasting scent wherever she has passed by.

In 2004, Demeulemeester collaborates with the photographer Steven Klein (b. 1965) for a collection named *Horses*, where photographs of horses were printed on the garments¹⁸ (Images 77 and 78).



Image 77 "Horses", collaboration between Demeulemeester and the photographer Steven Klein, Spring/Summer 2004, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.



Image 78 Photographs by Steven Klein, 1995, accessed on 10.01.2013, <<http://www.thegorgeousdaily.com/horses-by-steven-klein/>>.

¹⁷ L.T. "parce que la Vierge est une femme qui donne la vie, qu'elle est humble et transparente"

¹⁸ "Chronology", accessed on 05.12.2012, <<http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html>>.



Image 79, 80, 81 and 82 PJ Harvey wearing Ann Demeulemeester, photographs by Patrick Robyn, 2012, accessed on 06.08.2013, < <http://www.anndemeulemeester.be/chronology.html> >.

In 2011 PJ Harvey (and her band)¹⁹, who releases in the same year the album *Let England Shake*²⁰, shines in every event, concert and photo shoot in Ann Demeulemeester's Fall 2009-10 Women's Collection (Images 79 to 82). Once again, Ann's designs jump out of the catwalk (the year of the collection isn't important because everything Ann creates is timeless), to be part of something else, as a statement for both artists. About Ann, PJ says: "It is something to do with the soul of the work, the soul from which the work comes. There's something in Ann's soul that I see transferred into her work. I'm drawn to that"²¹.

Selfridges (luxury department store) released a few artistic short films presenting the collections of some notorious designers such as Dries Van Noten, Gareth Pugh and Rick Owens for Spring/Summer 2012. Ann Demeulemeester teamed up with actor/musician/director Michael Pitt and model Jamie Bochert (Pitt's girlfriend and Ann's favorite model) to create a short movie (Image 83). Bochert wanders through the desert in black and white looks from Spring/Summer 2012 collection, letting the fabrics flow in the wind, showing that, once again, the dualities that are always present in Ann's collections²².



Image 83 Jamie Bochert wearing Ann Demeulemeester, screen shot from the short film *Under the Desert Sun* by Michael Pitt, 2012, accessed on 16.11.2012, < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw__KB50IWk >.

¹⁹ Davies, D 2011, "i-N Conversation: PJ Harvey", accessed on 06.08.2013< <http://i-donline.com/2011/02/i-nconversion-pj-harvey/> >.

²⁰ "PJ Harvey *Let England Shake*", accessed on 06.08.2013, < <http://www.allmusic.com/album/let-england-shake-mw0002086979> >.

²¹ "PJ Harvey & Ann Demeulemeester in Style Zeitgeist #2", 2012, accessed on 06.08.2013, < <http://athenaemnieuwscentrum.blogspot.pt/2012/06/pj-harvey-ann-demeulemeester-in-style.html> >.

²² Hawkins, J, "Michael Pitt Takes Ann Demeulemeester Into The Desert Sun", accessed on 07.08.2013, < <http://portable.tv/fashion/post/michael-pitt-takes-ann-demeulemeester-into-the-desert-sun/> >.

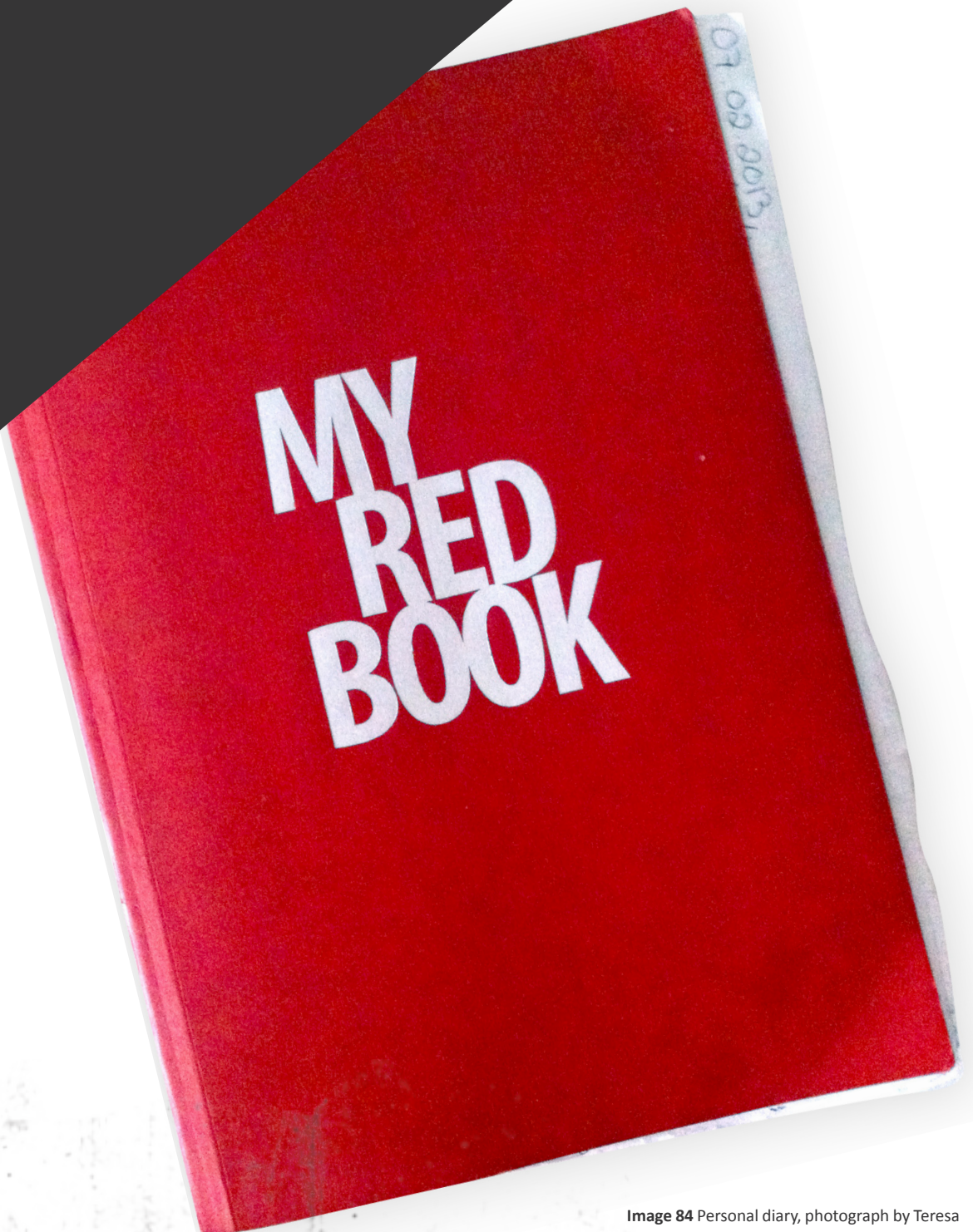


Image 84 Personal diary, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 21.09.2013.

III ~~EXPERIENCE~~

Image 85 Personal diary pages (MGMT, Jibóia, Fuck Buttons and Battles albums on the back), photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 21.09.2013..

tendo tanta sujeira acumulada logo abaixo!

Estava tudo tão sujo! Não compreendo porque é que o arquivo não é limpo com mais regularidade! Eu sei que aquilo é uma salva e em alguns corredores, os plásticos ocupam todo o espaço, e já tem o trabalho muito mais cansativo.

Temos de ordenar tudo e verificar os cabides são corretos. Coisa que me parece que não foi feita até então, porque tudo estava num estado tão caótico que estamos a trabalhar no mesmo há uma semana!

Na sexta-feira, dia 14, a Krystyna pediu-me para ir ao departamento de modelagem feminino e tive de copiar o molde de um colate da próxima coleção. Ela ficou impressionada por eu ter demorado tão pouco tempo e a passar a quem o trabalho.

Nesse dia fomos sair com o Guyan o estagiário novo da coleção masculina e com o Bram, o assistente do designer. Descobri que este último trabalhou como designer para a marca Mugliola durante 10 anos. É muito metódico e perfeccionista.

40

Consegui os meus 2 dias em Barcelona apesar de, com um sorriso na cara, a Krystyna me ter dito que não era nada profissional da minha parte perguntar tal coisa. Eu deixei bem claro, quando a questioneei sobre o assunto, que não havia qualquer tipo de problema se não fosse possível. Ela disse que nunca ninguém tinha pedido mais dias (claro!) toda a gente finge que está doente quando quer 1 ou 2 dias de descanso! e que não queria que os estagiários começassem a pedir o mesmo que eu. No entanto ela deu-me o que se me dava a pensar que ela gosta de mim!

~~Então~~ Esta semana já começamos a cortar tecidos para enviar para Portugal e também para a fábrica belga, para os primeiros protótipos.

Os primeiros protótipos e toda a sexta-feira passada, estivemos a cortar o tecido que é colocado nas caixas de joalheria (mais de 100!).

Confeccionei tecidos com a Céline e com a Elisabeth, que mostraram confiança em mim, pedindo para eu dar a minha opinião, ou quando descubi algo errado com os tecidos.

41

DIARY ENTRIES

These diary entries (Images 84 and 85) serve as a register of everything that has happened during the internship and they were written in a completely personal way.

04.02.2013

The first person I met on my first day was J, the head of the technical department. She was very nice and she told me that all the girls in the department are very crazy in a good way. G, an Australian girl who works in the technical collection team showed me every room in the building. On the ground floor there is the technical collection atelier, where the girls prepare everything that has to go to the manufacturers, to make the prototypes. Next to it there is the intern's room. This is where they (now with my help as well) make technical drawing books, fabric books, where all the materials (fabrics, buttons, ribbons, accessories) are so that they can be quickly cut, sorted and gathered to be sent to the manufactures. The building has two towers and we went to the first floor situated on the back tower, where the men's collections atelier is. On the two floors above work the pattern designers, there is also a small office for the accessories and shoes designer and for the designer of Collection Blanche on the second floor, they have big tables and all the tools needed including sewing machines and a lot of patterns hanging on the walls. On the basement there is the "old archive" that has all the collections, since the beginning of Ann Demeulemeester until 2005. At the same level, but on the front tower there is the "new archive" and it is fascinating the amount of clothes hanging in 5 rows, with hangers on both sides on top and bottom plus a row full of shoe boxes. The length of these rows is maybe of 10 meters. On the first floor of this tower there is the commercial and finances departments. I will receive a card where I will make my "clock ins" and "clock outs" in a machine that exists on this department. This tower only has one more floor, the women's collections atelier, which is extremely beautiful and has a lot of light. Everybody in every department saluted me. I was even presented to the cleaning ladies. It seems to me that the working environment is very familiar.

The intern's work is always done in group because there are tasks that must be finished in a short period of time. I met the other two interns who are there now for about three months and they introduced me to my first task: cutting swatches (Image 86). Every fabric in the collection has to be cut in small swatches (about forty swatches of 5cm x 3,5 cm) that will be attached to the fabric books (Images 87) later on (by hand). The technical department also has a board with these swatches to send with the technical *fiches*. When their swatches are about to finish we have to cut more.



Image 86 Fabric book example, Spring/Summer 2012, Women's Collection, property of BVBA 32, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 22.03.2013.



Image 87 Various fabric books, property of BVBA 32, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 22.03.2013.

At around 4 pm, the girls from the technical department came with forms and because I was new I helped cutting fabrics with one of the interns while the other gathered all the other materials needed. The papers that are attached to the fabrics when they're folded have codes so that the fabrics with the same codes are piled together and the respective technical form goes on top, after having the swatches needed stapled on the bottom and after it is copied and the copy is put on the desk of the person who asked that look. All these things are done by the interns but when there is no time, the person who is asking the look or looks or somebody who already finished their respective work come to help. That's what happened today and I was overwhelmed by everybody's velocity at this time. The transport company came around 6 and everything was put inside boxes and sent to the respective manufacturers. Our help is essential. I arrived in the busiest time and the intern's responsibility is very high. Everything has to be double checked because there is not a lot of time until Paris Fashion Week and all the prototypes have to be ready a week or two before the show.

The other interns told me that I will be paid around the 8th of every month and that while we are in Paris we receive an amount to spend in our daily necessities.

06.02.2013

Today I've been organizing A4 folders (Image 88) with fabrics from previous seasons. The designers consult them to get inspiration and sometimes they use the same fabrics in various collections. I've been doing this at a storage space at the women's collections atelier which is a very beautiful space with a lot of light. Each collection needs about four A4 full folders. The linings are usually the same so there is a storage space on the back of the intern's room where they put some back up rolls as well as fabrics that started arriving for next season. That's

where they also keep leathers, interfacings and shoulder pads. In each collection they use maybe about 200 materials (fabrics, knits, jerseys and leathers). Today the other interns told me that I will be able to choose about 30 meters of fabric for free, from previous collections!! I wish I can choose fabrics from the Desert Collection (Spring/Summer 2013), I love the ones with the fringes and knots!! Today I was told as well that I'll spend about two weeks in Paris, in the end of the month!

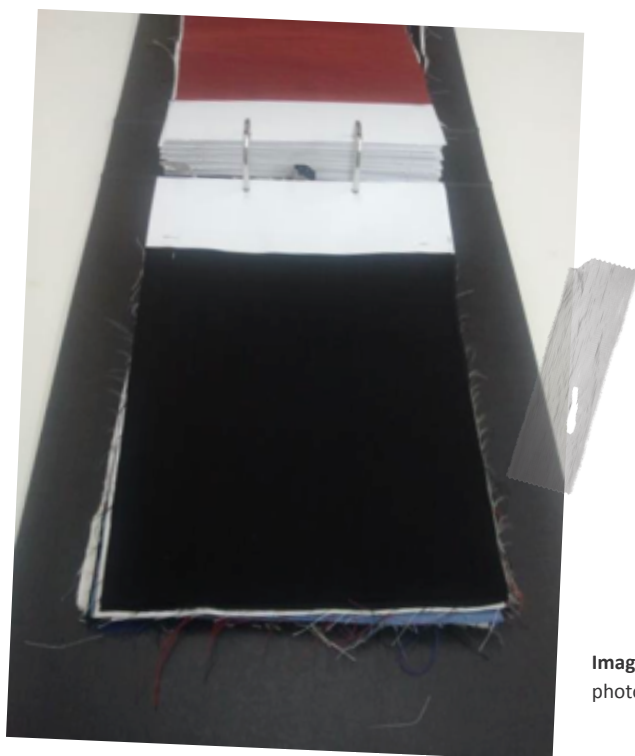


Image 88 A4 fabric folder, property of BVBA 32, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 22.03.2013.

07.02.2013

We've been checking all the fabrics that have to go on the folders and on the fabric books. We can't cut some of the fabrics yet because there is not a lot left and we can only cut them after styling. Because maybe Ann will choose to make doubles and for that all the left fabrics have to be perfectly intact.

11.02.2013

The two other interns are sick and the Romanian one still went to work because she was afraid to tell the girls. She did nothing the whole day through (she actually fell asleep various times during the day) so I had to do everybody's job. In the morning, with the help of one of the girls from the technical department we unpacked all the shoes from the collection, disposing them neatly on the women's collections atelier, where the styling is going to be done.

In the end of the day, the head of the technical department came to me, with a "delicate" subject. 900 invitations in the form of a scarf had to be folded and put inside envelopes. She sent the girl home and I stayed there with her and another girl. I folded about 750 invitations until 22 pm, I'll have to continue folding tomorrow but it's going really fast! She was very sweet and brought me home! We talked a lot about us and about working at Ann Demeulemeester. It was truly interesting.

13.02.2013

The styling days started today and everything is very quiet. Ann is at the women's atelier with Michèle Montagne. After the styling, next Sunday, we have to come to help cutting fabric for the doubled garments (pieces that are in more than one look).

Last weekend I went out with my flat mate and I met two very interesting guys. One is the owner of a famous interior designer company in Antwerp and the other one is a jewellery designer.

14.02.2013

Today I had to steam iron three dresses from Fall-Winter 2011 and complete them, placing more than a hundred feathers (per each) in the proper place. These dresses are going to be taken by Michèle Montagne (press). I think they're for PJ Harvey!

24.02.2013

This week was completely crazy! The girls started pinning the pages for the fabric books with the help of other people, such as Collection Grise designer, people from the Unit and sometimes the girls from the technical department. While they were doing it, I spent two days helping the photographer during the photo shoot. As he photographed I had to write the code of the garment, accessory or shoe and the photograph number. Because it goes very fast, I had to keep up with all the numbers and on the second day he particularly asked for my help again. This was a great way to learn more about the whole collection. Now I feel prepared to work at the showroom.

Thursday there was a strike and we weren't informed, so after spending the day pinning and my hands hurting like hell, I stood more than one hour waiting for the tram, freezing in the middle of the ice and snow.

On the next day, we were able to finish pinning and taping all the pages to the 35 books! We also packed all the clothes so that they are ready when the men that will load the trucks to Paris arrive.

14.03.2013

After we helped loading the trucks, we were off to Paris. The other interns went with another driver. As soon as we arrived, we helped placing everything inside the showroom and we started unpacking and hanging the clothes in wooden hangers.

Image 89 Ann Demeulemeester and Patrick Robyn at the show location, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.



On the day of the show, we came to its location situated at Place Vendôme around 9 o'clock in the morning (Image 89). The site is really beautiful, has very high ceilings, frescoed walls and a roof with an unfinished look. The sits were already placed to the public, as well as a white carpet, with the route of the models. A huge white curtain was placed at the site of the entry and exit of the models to and from the catwalk. All preparations were made downstairs: makeup, hair and clothes (Image 90 and 91). The conditions were not the best because the place was huge and even with super heating machines that blew hot air, everybody was frizzing. It seems to me that the building was once a bank, it still had two huge vault round doors.



Image 90 Makeup explanation, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.

Image 91 Hair explanation, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.

The girls from work explained everything to us (the interns) about how to dress the models in a couple of looks because some students from a Parisian fashion school came to help us and it was also our job to help them.

Ann Demeulemeester practiced and coordinated the models through their rehearsal, showing them where they had to pass and the pace she wanted them to walk in, while her husband was also analyzing it from a sitting place (Image 92). The previous day, me and the cool intern also made a poster with a very simplified giant plant of the room and the direction that the models had to walk with arrows, which was posted near the stairs, in the backstage (Image 93).



Image 92 Ann Demeulemeester guiding the models through the catwalk, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.



Image 93 Catwalk map behind the model in the middle, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.

I took a lot of pictures (Images 94 to 98)!! The hairdresser and makeup artist that were there the day before at the showroom, explained the respective teams what to do and everything went beautifully.



Image 94 Model wearing look 17, backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.



Image 95 Model wearing look 5, backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.



Image 96 Model wearing look 13, backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.



Image 97 Model wearing look 26, backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.

Image 98 Various models waiting for the beginning of the show at the backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.02.2013.

It had to be us, again, to carry everything back through the stairs (these also in the shape of a spiral): sewing machine, 30 hats, each one in its box, clothing, accessories, all the boxes with things we might have needed, such as a first aid kit, sticker rolls to clean the clothes, iron, scarves, socks, underwear, insoles, ...

The time passed by very fast and it was a nice experience, though, as we have not watched the show in live, it seemed to me that nothing had happened. The models came in running in a rush to the backstage to change to their own clothes to go to other shows.

In the afternoon we organized everything in the showroom (Images 99 to 102), while the head of the technical department was preparing for the "lesson" that she was going to give to the sales team. She had to talk about the concept of the collection, and about each style in particular. Our work was based on showing the sales people, all existing options within each style, which could be a variation in the main fabric, in color, size and finishes. Followed by the explanation of the accessories and shoes designer, with accessories and shoes and finally the jewellery designer and Ann explained the pieces of jewellery that have been produced for this collection.

Image 99 View from one side of the showroom,
photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 07.03.2013.



Image 100 Shoes and accessories space in the
showroom, photograph by Teresa Mineiro,
07.03.2013.



Image 101 View from one side of the
showroom, photograph by Teresa Mineiro,
07.03.2013.



Image 102 Showroom detail, photograph by
Teresa Mineiro, 07.03.2013.

These days seemed to me all the same and I found them very hard to pass.

The intern I don't like spent the whole time eating and rambling around the showroom space. When she was resolved to do something, or when we forced her to do so, she always did only half the work, or did simply the opposite of what she had been asked to do.

Saturday we started to work as usual at 8:30 am and we left at around 7 pm. When I was already in the subway to go to the centre of Paris, I received a call from one of the girls from the technical department that was working in the fitting room, asking me and A to go back because our help was needed in the Haider Ackermann showroom, to sew skirts. Apparently, Anne Chapelle thought it would be essential to the collection. When we got there, around eight in the evening, we still had to wait for them to finish making the patterns and cut the fabrics and then only at about a half past eight in the evening we were able to start working. When me and my fellow intern from Switzerland finished sewing the two parts (lining and main part) that made up each of the skirts we were supposed to make, the Romanian was still centered in unpicking the first sewing she had done (supposedly a very simple seam that consisted in an almost straight line). I helped her rip up the rest and in the end we explained to her how to make an invisible hem. I sewed the rest of her skirt while Naomi and the only girl who was with us, that really worked for Haider Ackermann, joined the lining parts to their respective outsides of the first two skirts. The Romanian was still sewing her invisible hem when Naomi and I had already finished all the other two skirts (including our invisible seams). Despite all we have asked her several times if everything was going well and she have secured us so with her typical "Un-hun". After finishing her work, we had to redo it because the yarn stitches were visible on the outside and were too tight, creating frills that were not supposed to be there. While we finished her work, she merely stayed in the kitchen, eating and watching Haider Ackermann's show on repeat in a television, which had been that day. We got out around a half past eleven, without dinner (at least me and my favorite intern), still having to walk to the hotel. The girls from the *cabine* stood around, just in case but we didn't see them anymore that day.

There were two Haider Ackerman interns that should have done the work we did that night, but they were already drunk when they called them to come and help. They were dismissed early so that they could rest and enjoy their stay in Paris a little, before they started working seriously in the showroom. Now, we had already started working earlier in the week and had to work until late some days. Nothing seemed fair to me, but I can say it was an enriching experience. I was able to see how another similar brand, ruled by the same standards, but so different when it comes to organization and style, works. I could see the clothes that were in the show and showroom and briefly analyze how they were made.

The Romanian intern's slowness started to affect us so me and the other girl started running out of patience. We had, not only to perform our tasks, as well as hers. These days were very stressful, nonetheless, if the atmosphere among the interns had been better, everything would have run smoothly. The responsible girl from the fitting room even asked her to look "more alive", but it did not work. We started, from the first moment, to learn about the organization of our showroom and soon we knew by heart the place of all the things. On our last day of showroom, she still walked like she was lost when she had to bring clothes from the cabin to the showroom.

Our job is to always keep the showroom neat and organized, so that the members of the sales team are able to find what they are looking for easily. The pieces are numbered and separated by section.

It was fun to see how the sales team works and the many different types of customers they have. Grace Coddington was in the showroom too!! We had about 15 sales people of various nationalities. Some were very friendly like R, who is the designer of Collection Gris, a girl who works in the commercial department, and O. who only works in the showroom.

The food, as I had heard before, was always truly exceptional. And I think that it is true what they say about most of the customers preferring to schedule their appointments near lunch time. Lunch was from a half past midday until a half past three and from this time onwards there were always little surprises like chocolate fondants, tiramisus, fruit, and other treats. A lot of people also took their breakfast there, at the showroom.

We had 4 models working with us, one of them is Ann Demeulemeester's "resident" model (always working in the showrooms, participating in the explanations of the collections, making the photo shoots wearing everything in the collections and being the fitting model, after the showroom, when everything is finalized for production). Whenever a customer asked to see some clothes, the girls in the fitting room (Image 103) dressed them so that the first ones could really see how the pieces looked like in the body. Other customers preferred to try the clothes themselves or even if the person who was selling the collection to them was a woman, they asked her to do it, if they had to hurry up.



Image 103 Fitting room, showroom,
photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 07.03.2013.



Image 104 Last day of showroom, photograph
by Teresa Mineiro, 08.03.2013.

On the last day we were done right on time, it was not even 11 o'clock at night, which apparently was a record, and we had everything ready for the next day, to be put in the vans back to Antwerp (Image 104). We all went for a drink and N said goodbye to everybody. On the next day she was already in Switzerland.

We still had to go to Michèle Montagne's office to pick t from the previous collection. The pain I feel in my feet is now a bit more bearable but I still don't feel anything on my big toes. My All Star sneakers are definitely not the right shoes to wear for ten days in a row, always standing up and walking round and round.

Back to the company, we set a mini showroom at our room. Everybody can make their orders and I already made mine! I bought a pair of boots and a knitwear vest! They also surprised us and let us choose a tank top!

20.03.2013

I'm finally free of the incompetent intern!! Today the new intern arrived. One of the girls from the technical department showed her the place and after that she started helping me. She's from Austria but studies fashion in Berlin. The time was spent mostly in the archive because Ann Demeulemeester and the head of the technical department selected a lot of clothes that are going to stock sale. So we had to reorganize the space. In the end of the day I went to IKEA with Tanja and we had dinner at her flat. She is my neighbor, so I will always have company from now on!!

04.04.2013

Working with Tanja has been great!! We've been working at the technical department because a lot of the girls are on vacation! The work we've been doing consists of cutting things and gluing them. I made all the stickers for the A4 books using very mediocre softwares (plural!!) and then I started helping Tanja with cutting (by hand) and gluing technical drawings and respective prices from the pricelist. Then we had to copy all the pages (more than 200) so that the outlines of the images don't appear. Because of the glue the pages started to get sticky and we had to copy everything in small amounts at a time. We spent about two days doing only this. We were explained what was the new men's collection inspired from and we got to see the drawings for the new collection as well as all the fabrics. In the end we were asked to think about names for fabrics, according to the theme.

Some days ago we separated all the looks from Spring/Summer 2012 Men's and Women's collections from the archive, so that Ann Demeulemeester can choose everything that she thinks that is not important to keep to be sold at the stock sale. We also had to organize the shoe boxes row from this collection on and it is crazy the lack of organization left by the last interns. The space is almost not enough but we've been told that this is a constant work, so sorting and archiving shoe boxes will never end until there is really no space left.

The new fabrics have been arriving and they have to be checked by one of the girls from the technical department and me or Tanja, because sometimes they can have stains or noticeable errors in the weave that have to be reported to the responsible person in the production department. As soon as they're checked and if there's no problem with it, me and Tanja start to cut the needed swatches from it.

18.04.2013

Today we made the patterns and we cut the fabric for three different sizes of jewellery boxes. We cut more than 100!! This is the fabric that wraps the jewels and it is going to be used to wrap the jewels from the Fall/Winter 2013 collection.

14.04.2013

Today I spent the morning at the pattern department, helping copying a pattern. The patterns are copied when there are two garments with the same pattern but different materials, such as leather and fabric, because they are not produced by the same manufactures.

22.04.2013

Because everything was already chosen to go to stock sale, we are now organizing all the collections after Spring/Summer 2012 (Men's and Women's), which means everything in the collections Fall/Winter 2012-13, Spring/Summer 2013 and Fall/Winter 2013-14. It is really a lot! We checked all the hangers, the way the clothes were hanging so they don't get damaged and their order! It has been taking us a lot of time because nothing was really in order. I also vacuum cleaned the whole new archive because apparently no one ever cleans it and the good conditions of the things kept there also depend on it.

Ann and Patrick have been in reunions with the shoes and accessories designer, to decide the pieces for the next Men's collection, as well as with the assistant designer.

We also have a new intern at the men's atelier. I wouldn't like to have his work.. He's always making tea and going to buy the assistant's lunch as well as copying a lot of papers and drawings.

I'm going to work at the stock sale on Friday and Sunday. I don't think I'll have money to buy something.

28.04.2013

Working at the stock sale (Images 105 to 108) was not as exhausting as working in the showroom. The place had to be tidy and I had to help some customers who were searching for something in specific.



Image 105 Stock sale, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.04.2013.

Image 106 Stock sale, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.04.2013.



Image 107 Stock sale, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.04.2013.



Image 108 Stock sale, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.04.2013.

The space was divided between Ann Demeulemeester's showroom and Haider Ackermann's showroom, which was a lot smaller.

On the first days I wasn't able to find anything for me because everything I liked was too expensive. However, on the last days, older garments arrived from the Unit and I was able to find two jackets for me and one for my boyfriend. In the end of the day I was able to try everything! And there was a huge surprise! I was able to choose a garment for me, no matter what the price was! Because I already had some things from Ann and I was in love with an Indian silk Haider's jacket, that was the one I chose (I also felt he was indebted to me).

19.05.2013

The new intern arrived!! Her name is Katharina and she is from Germany. She is very sweet and efficient. They never talk in German in front of me so I always participate in all the conversations. The three of us were able to cut almost all the swatches that were needed for the books and the work is being done extremely fast!

We received some fabrics with a print some days ago. Because the designer's assistant wants everything to be perfect, he will decide where the patterns will be placed so that the print continues faultless between parts (like from a shoulder to the sleeve or in details like pockets that have to overlap exactly the part that is beneath).

After he decides where the pattern has to be placed, the girl who is responsible for that garment and the second assistant place pins on the fabric in all the edges of the patterns. She also takes photographs to give to the manufacturers.

Then, we have to print the whole print (in parts), cut the right edges and glue all the parts perfectly (we started with A4 pages but it was possible to make it with A3 ones as a plot printer

was allegedly too expensive). The print consisted in 15 pages. Hereafter our job was to place the paper print on top of the fabric print, feel where the pins were and place the patterns on top, copying them and finally cutting them. These new patterns go with the original pattern to the manufacture, to make sure that they cut the fabric right. Until now we did probably more than twenty print placements (for jackets, vests, trousers, shirts and hats).

Everybody is really happy with our work and we just hope that this ends quickly so that we can make other things that are important as well. We want to finish everything more than on time!

Me, Tanja and Katharina have been together a lot of times after work and we've been having a lot of fun.

10.06.2013

1- I met one of the assistant designers of the women's collections and she has been very helpful with information for building the company's structure and telling me how things work in some departments. She gives input concerning accessories, and concept. She also works as a costume designer. She is always very kind and friendly.

2- The next women's collection fabrics are now arriving. Some of them also have prints and I'm a bit happy to not be the one having to make the print placements once again.

3- All the garments for men's collection are done and the styling starts tomorrow!!

4- The print placements look amazing and I'm very proud of my work!

5- We've been an amazing team, always one step ahead of what we've been asked for Last collection, with the other interns I was leaving work at 19:30 and now we always go home at the normal time!

6- Last week I went to visit the manufacture that works the most with Ann Demeulemeester collections and also a knitwear and jersey manufacture (Images 109 and 110). Of the first one I was expecting a lot more. There is no super advanced technology, although they work in parallel with a manufacture in Tunisia as well, where I heard the work goes faster. It has a very familiar environment and looks a bit old fashioned. In Belgium, this manufacture only produces prototypes for the main collection and everything in Collection Blanche. The knitwear manufacture is really impressive and works with the latest technologies. I saw a lot of other garments from very famous designers and the work was perfect and really interesting. I love knitwear!!

Image 109 Knited piece, knit and jersey manufacture, photograph by Katharina Kramer, 13.06.2013.



Image 110 Knitting machine, knit and jersey manufacture, photograph by Katharina Kramer, 13.06.2013.



7- I went to work in the Unit one day to help organizing things that just arrived, sorting and labeling them by style and then by costumer. It is incredible to think about the whole process concerning one garment, from the idea, prototyping, selling, producing, shipping and selling it again to the final consumer!

8- The girl from the technical department who is responsible to monitor the interns work this season is very happy and proud of us and she says that they never had such an efficient and positive team.

9- I'm going to Paris again! This time is going to be different!

16.06.2013

This week passed really fast. I had to go to the Unit to help them with sorting everything that was arriving and placing each garment in its respective order box. They're receiving Ann's and Haider's collections, so I had to help with both. We already started pinning the swatches for Collection Blanche fabric book but next week is going to be crazy, with pinning two other different books: Men's Collection and Collection Grise.

The head of the technical department has been talking a lot with us and explaining how important is the intern's work in the company and she also described the company as it was when she first started working there. It was a lot smaller, there was only one computer, only one archive, the Unit was placed there and everything worked in the front tower because the one in the back was not there yet.

Yesterday me and the girls, we went to see the Royal Academy of Fine Arts fashion show. It lasted four hours and consisted in the collections and smaller projects of all the fashion design students. I saw Walter van Beirendonck, one of the Antwerp 6. A lot of projects were clearly influenced by him. The show is sponsored by a lot of big brands and the most impressive one for me was Yves Saint Laurent. It was pretty interesting to see how things work in a different university and figure that their professionalism and the reputation they acquired has taken them to a level that's higher than Lisbon Fashion week!

27.06.2013

I arrived in Paris today and went directly to the showroom. This time, Katharina and Tanja went before me. Tanja will stay there and me and Kat will come back tomorrow, in the end of the day. I helped in the showroom with hanging and organizing clothes. In the afternoon, because we already did almost everything (always one step ahead) we were able to go out for a one hour break and we went to drink a glass of wine. The weather was fine. The casting was still going on and as I heard, since Michèle Montagne arrived there, the process slowed down because she creates too many options for the looks, questioning what has been decided before.

The catering team is not here yet but I hope they arrive tomorrow! I'm looking forward to taste their delicious meals! We made the model boards as well as a board with the drawing of the catwalk and the models should go.

We had dinner at the showroom and in the end we had to wait for the most loyal Portuguese manufacturer that had booked a flight to Paris that night to deliver some double garments that were not yet delivered.

After arranging things for tomorrow with the girls, I went to my hotel, which is closer to the showroom than the one I was in last time, and I already set my alarm for a half past five am. Tomorrow is the day of the show!

28.06.2013

This day went better than I ever expected!!

I woke up very early and went to the show location with the head of the technical department and the shoes and accessories assistant designer. There we arranged the backstage space with the model boards, putting all the looks in the right places and placing everything we might need on a table. The hairdressers, make-up artists and models started arriving and because our job was to dress them, we had to wait until the hair and make-up were done. At this time it occurred to me and Katharina that there was a possibility to change our tickets to go back to Antwerp to Sunday. The company's driver, who also books this tickets for everyone in the company, helped us and it was done! Katharina asked a girl she knew in Paris if we could stay at her place and every arrangement went perfectly! We watched the rehearsal (Image 111) and the show's music is by Devendra Banhart.



Image 111 Models' rehearsal on the runway, photograph by Tanja Ellenshon, 28.06.2013.



Image 112 From left to right: A model, Michèle Montagne, the assistant designer and Ann Demeulemeester, backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.

Meanwhile, the model I dressed is called Gryphon and his girlfriend is the super model Charlotte Free. She was there accompanying him and she is definitely one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen. Ann and her designer assistant, Patrick and Michèle Montagne were checking all the looks as soon as each model was dressed (Image 112).

Just like before, we also had the help of some fashion design students from a Parisian school. To me it makes a lot of sense that the students get in touch with professional companies while they're studying to have an idea of how things work.

Once again I took a lot of photos (Images 113 to 117)!



Image 113 Two models already dressed for the show, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.



Image 114 Runway being prepared, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.



Image 115 Already dressed model, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.



Image 116 Backstage, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.



Image 117 Already dressed model with a print coat, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.

The show went perfectly and while we were sipping our champagne we were also cleaning the space to put everything in the truck, back to the showroom. When we got there, the catering team was already there, and our lunch consisted in a soup, an incredible risotto, roast beef and a beautiful assortment of vegetables (Image 118).



Image 118 The catering team at the showroom kitchen, photograph by Tanja Ellenshon, 28.06.2013

After lunch we finished organizing the space and because there were three different collections presented there (Men's Collection, Collection Grise and Collection Blanche), it was decided that Collection Blanche would be presented at an annex space that I had never seen before (Images 119 and 120).



Image 119 Little garden between the main showroom and the annex, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.



Image 120 Little garden between the main showroom and the annex, photograph by Teresa Mineiro, 28.06.2013.

In the end of the afternoon there was the assistant designer's explanation of the collection (we also helped showing the different materials and garments) and I met one or two sales people that I knew from the showroom before with whom I talked a bit. They're really nice people.

After the explanation, me and Kathy went to have drinks and grab something to eat and now we're at Kathy's friend apartment in a very calm area.

30.06.2013

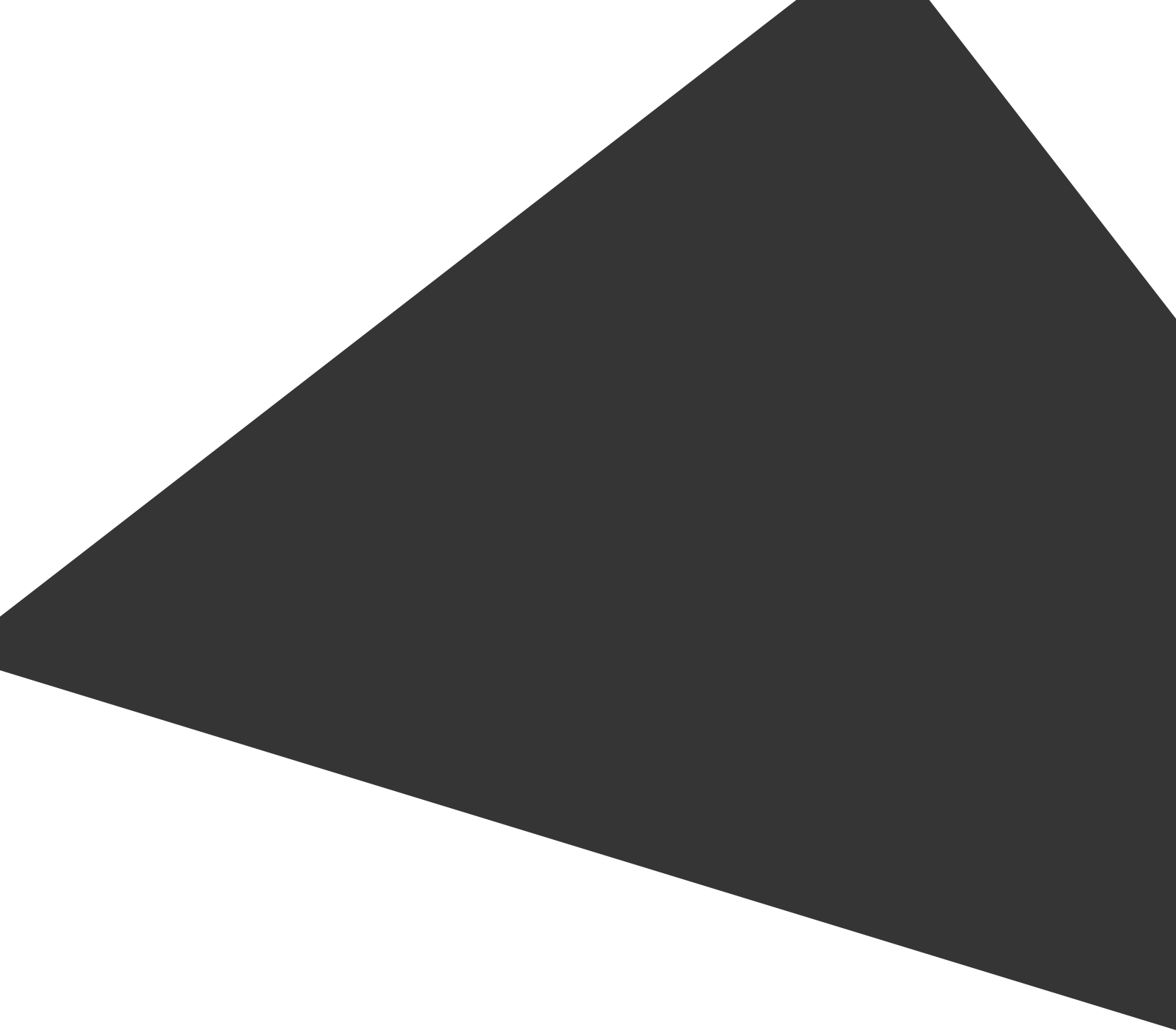
This weekend was amazing! Saturday me and Kathy went shopping at thrifty shops and in the end of the day we went to a party in a friend's shop and then we went to a club inside the Moulin Rouge! Today we hanged around Montparnasse, where there are a lot of art galleries. We arrived at 9 pm and now I'm going to bed. It's only two weeks more and then I'm back to Portugal!

06.07.2013

This week we went to choose our fabrics!!!!!! I brought 33 meters and me and the girls bought two plants to give to both Ann Demeulemeester and Anne Chapelle, with a small card written by all of us!

12.07.2013

Today was our last day at the company (for me and Tanja), everybody was a bit nostalgic but we had a great time! We printed a lot of funny polaroids to give to the girls at the technical department and we took pictures with everybody! All the work is done in advance and we think that Kathy will have an easy time until she also leaves in October. We received an Ann Demeulemeester's tote bag with a little diary and a leather thing to put our address in on our luggage. We also received a recommendation letter. In the end of the day we went for drinks and tomorrow I'll be back in Portugal with all my family and friends! I'm really happy to go back but I'm sure that I'll miss everybody that I met here a lot! I'll definitely keep in touch!!!





IV REPORT

COMPANY STRUCTURE

The following organogram (Image 121) represents the latest company structure. The intern is more familiar with some departments than others because her work didn't involve the activities carried out in some of them, namely the Commercial Department, Financial Management Department and Production Atelier.

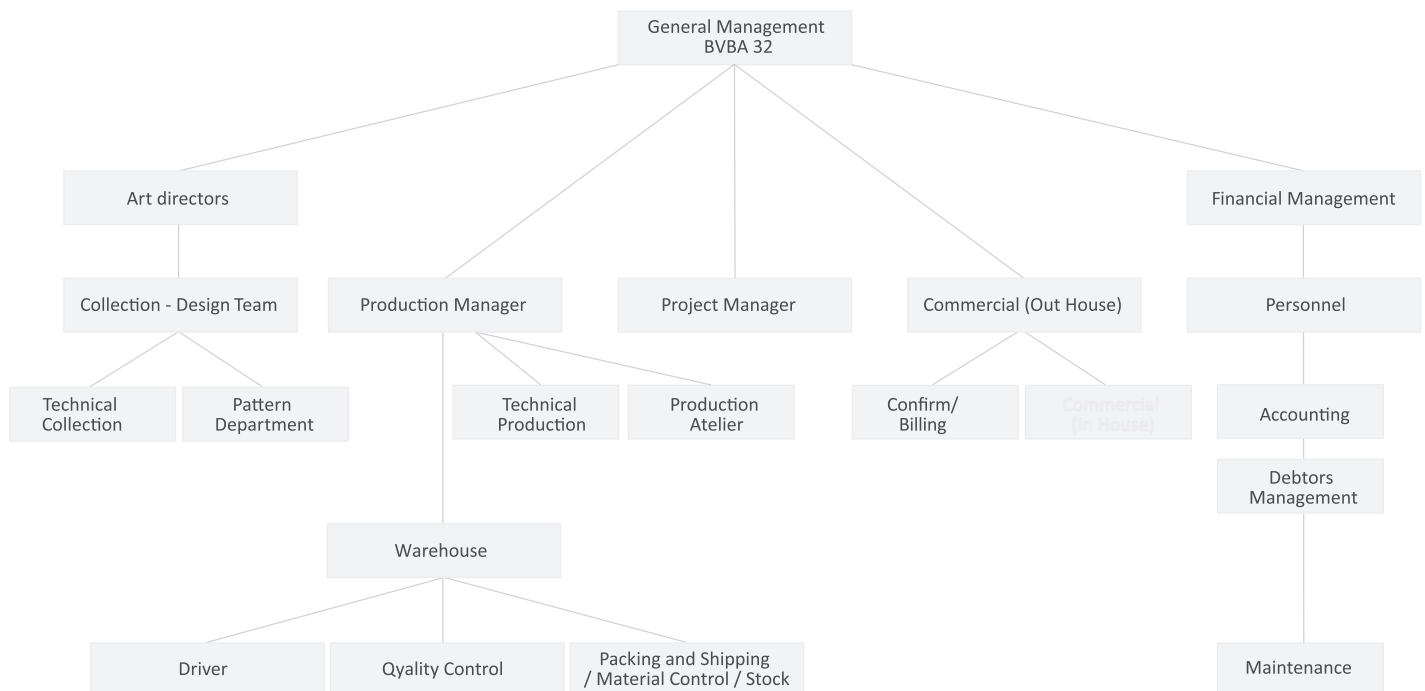


Image 121 Organogram that explains the structure of the company, provided by BVBA, 32, 13.08.2013.

BVBA 32, is divided in five main departments: Art Directors, Production Manager, Project Manager, Commercial and Financial Management.

The way the company is divided makes perfect sense, and this conclusion was reached after coming in contact with most of the working processes and participating in a few of them. In the following pages, the work of the rest of the departments will be briefly described, based on conversations held with members of those departments or, in the last resort, with the head of the technical department, who kindly explained a bit of everything in a long conversation.

ART DIRECTORS

Obviously, the art directors are Ann Demeulemeester and Patrick Robyn, who decide all the inspiration and explain to the assistant designers what they want in a collection. They control not only the mood, inspirations, fabrics and shapes, but the whole artistic process,

manipulating and approving what is suggested by the assistant designers and giving all their input to the elaboration of the collections. It is also them who decide the styling for the shows and who make the casting of the models. Ultimately, it is Ann's ideas and Ann's work that is carried out with helping hands.

COLLECTION – DESIGN TEAM

For Women's collection, Ann Demeulemeester chose her long time assistant, a former model and a costume designer as her assistants to take care of the design process. They have to understand what the designer wants and work in that direction, always oriented by Ann.

It is the same in men's collection. Although they have only two assistant designers, they always have an intern that helps them with things that they don't have time to do.

Then, there is a shoes and accessories designer, who meets with Ann for some days, to decide the new shapes of shoes. They make unfinished prototypes by hand, so they can define what they want the heels and soles to look like.

There is also a German jewelry designer that is in contact with Ann. He produces all her requests by hand.

The assistant designer for Collection Blanche chooses the garments, shoes and accessories by researching the archives. Her aim is to find pieces from older collections that can fit in the new main collections. She always decides to make some changes that can be made on the type of material used or in some details. She also selects pieces that were best sellers in previous collections, but the aim of Collection Blanche is not only based in selling all time best sellers. The objective is to evoke the pure spirit of Ann Demeulemeester. In this collection, the fabrics used come from stock from previous collections as well as from the new women's collection.

Collection Grise has exactly the same essence as Collection Blanche. It is archive work, but in this case, it is made for the male market, following more classic lines. The core pieces are suits and shirts. This collection is also cheaper than the normal Men's Collection, because it only reuses fabrics from previous seasons still existent in stock.

TECHNICAL COLLECTION

The technical collection department is constituted by 6 people. The technical tasks are divided by each member. Their work involves understanding the briefing of the designer and everything in between until it becomes real. For this, there is a continuous and constant dialogue between the various teams so that when the first prototypes are produced, there are no errors in the garments. One of the tasks of these people is to find manufacturers, settle prices with them and coordinate the entire process of prototyping. All the fabrics and trims are in the interns' room and it is up to them to arrange everything asked for in the technical *fiches*, organizing each pile of materials by style and by manufacturer. The people who work there have a great sense of responsibility and do everything carefully so that there is no error, always explaining very clearly all kinds of details. The right side of the fabric is always marked and polyester bags with the trims are always checked before shipping.

The work is divided among the people of the technical department: one girl controls knits, jerseys and jewelry, another that is responsible for pants and shirts, other for accessories, another takes care of the jackets and coats, leathers and furs and two other are responsible for dresses, scarves, vests and other pieces that are not in one of the usual categories, one of these two is the head of the technical collection department and the other one is also responsible to make shrinkage tests as well as try different finishings.

The technical department is responsible for the organization of the archive and for the space where the interns work as well as the interns themselves. There is a usual stock checking and the materials needed for the day-to-day work are ordered by one of the girls. These materials can be polyester bags to put the materials so they do not get damaged during transportation, products related to the conservation of the files (like plastic protector for clothes, cloth bags for accessories, boxes ...) and office supplies. This is also the department responsible for hiring interns, and the girl who takes care of the interviews is also responsible for the accessories.

PATTERN DEPARTMENT

The pattern department has two floors. There are nine people working there. After the designers have designed the pieces, they proceed to find the best pattern for the garment. It is up to them to interpret technical drawings and create a pattern that resembles to what is asked to them. Because the brand has been around for so long, the pattern department always has old patterns that serve as a base for new ones. Otherwise they have to start from scratch. However, if a design turns out to be very complex and bold or if the fabric reacts in unexpected ways, they often make prototypes, sometimes in the final fabric in order to test how it hangs in certain parts. Then they can be sure about the pattern that a piece of clothing has to have. The pattern department perfects the patterns and prototypes until the assistant designers and Ann are satisfied. However, they do not use any accessories or trims, they have no lining or pockets and these prototypes are kept in the archive and serve as a model for production, later on. It is the pattern department that gives all the information for the technical form, according to what was decided by the designers as well as all the *metrages* (quantity in meters) of fabric needed for each piece of clothing.

PRODUCTION MANAGER

There is a production manager who works in an office with four other people and her job consists in creating files with all the information for everything in the collection (in a costume made software) - all the new garments, accessories, shoes and jewels and all kinds of prices. She makes the final price list. There is a person that is half helping her, half helping the person in charge of fabric orders. These last two people are very important and they are the ones who receive the fabrics and insert them in the system, usually, giving them new names. They have folders with all the fabrics information per season, from washing labels to prices. When they insert a fabric in the system, the production manager's software has all the information concerning the prices of every meter of all the different fabrics. Then, there are two other people dedicated to all the accessories and trims existent in the company. They also insert all the data concerning each kind of material in the system, so that the manager's program also has this information.

TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

There are three people working on technical production, their job is to double check the technical department's forms and then they update them, inserting all the remarks that result from the last fittings. Then they send everything to the manufacture to produce the requested amounts. During this process they are responsible for all the communication until the final delivery of the finished garments in the Unit (warehouse). In the end they carry out the final quality control.

WAREHOUSE

In the warehouse, known as Unit in the company, there are many people working, such as the people in the technical production department, in the production atelier and the drivers, who also work in packing, shipping and stock. There are also more people who do the latter two tasks as well as quality control.

The drivers take documents and materials from the warehouse to the atelier and the other way round. They can deliver urgent prototype styles to be done by the Belgian manufacturers and they are the ones who pack the trucks to go to Paris.

When the collection is produced and starts arriving at the warehouse, the same styles are grouped by size, at the same time as the garments are counted and checked on a list with the amounts that should be there. They are also analyzed and a report is filled when there is a mistake in one or more garments, for instance: if a garment is missing from the requested amount, if there are stains or holes in the fabrics, if the fabric is used in the wrong way, if it doesn't have all the buttons, among other things. This process continues and after everything is organized by style and size (with the help of an original fabric book and technical drawing book), the clients' orders are sorted out. The clients' requests can be urgent and in those cases, the pieces are sent as soon as they arrive in the warehouse even if the whole order is not in yet. Normally, the whole request is gathered, checked once again and then packed and shipped to the respective shop or store.

PROJECT MANAGER

There is one project manager, he is the head of the commercial department, but he says that it is difficult for him to give a specific name to what he does. He supervises the work of the sales team during the showroom and handles all kinds of contacts with the buyers, from talking about their budgets to advising them about buying certain garments or about different sales techniques. He also works as visual which means taking care of the look and the merchandise for Ann Demeulemeester shops abroad. He picks out (according to what was shown in the fashion show and the mood of each collection) the essential pieces to be bought and sold by these shops, always bearing in mind the public of each country. It was also his responsibility to coordinate the making process and the opening of these shops, taking into account that the final aspect of a new shop has to be in accordance with the spirit and concept of the brand. He has the knowledge that allows him to distinguish the different kinds of markets, from country to country, which makes his work very versatile. When he started working at Ann Demeulemeester, the company was still growing gradually and it was possible for him to watch

and take part in a lot of steps that were decisive to the growth of the company in the process that transformed it in what it is today.

COMMERCIAL (OUT HOUSE)

There is somebody working as a freelancer that visits shops and basically does the same job that is done by the commercial department in house, which is establishing contact with the client.

COMMERCIAL (IN HOUSE)

In addition to the project manager there are two other people working in the commercial department (in house), and this work is based on all contact with the customers of the Ann Demeulemeester collections (shops, department stores, online shops and private clients). When a new store shows its interest in selling collections from Ann Demeulemeester, this is the department responsible for ascertaining the reliability of the company that contacts them. As a result, a visit is paid to the shop which has displayed its interest or alternatively their website is accessed. It is important that Ann's collections fit well in the shop space (either considering the interior design of a normal shop or the graphic design of an online shop) as well as with the other things sold there. Other companies that provide products to the interested shop are contacted in order to assess the reliability of that same company in terms of payment trustworthiness. If everything is right, that same shop can arrange an appointment with a sales person to buy the collection, during the showroom, in Paris. It is also the responsibility of the sales department to answer any questions from customers, solve problems concerning orders and deliveries (one of the two other people who work in this department is more directed to deliveries/clients) and also to visit the shops in order to explain the collections, how some more elaborate pieces work and how they are used, so they can be prepared to sell the collection in a personalized way.

When a shop does not duly pay the stock that was previously ordered, the pieces that were ordered become part of stock and might serve as backup for other shops that ask for the same products again. There are usually no re-buys from the same collection, because at the time a collection is sold at the stores, the manufacturers are already producing the next collection. Therefore, the company has only one production period for each collection and new orders can't be made after the normal sales period. If a product was a total best seller, it is highly likely that it will be part of Collection Blanche, sooner or later. Or, if a customer really wants to re-buy something, it is possible to open an exception, when the quantities asked can cover the cost of opening a new production line

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COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The following organogram explains the development of an Ann Demeulemeester collection (Image 122).

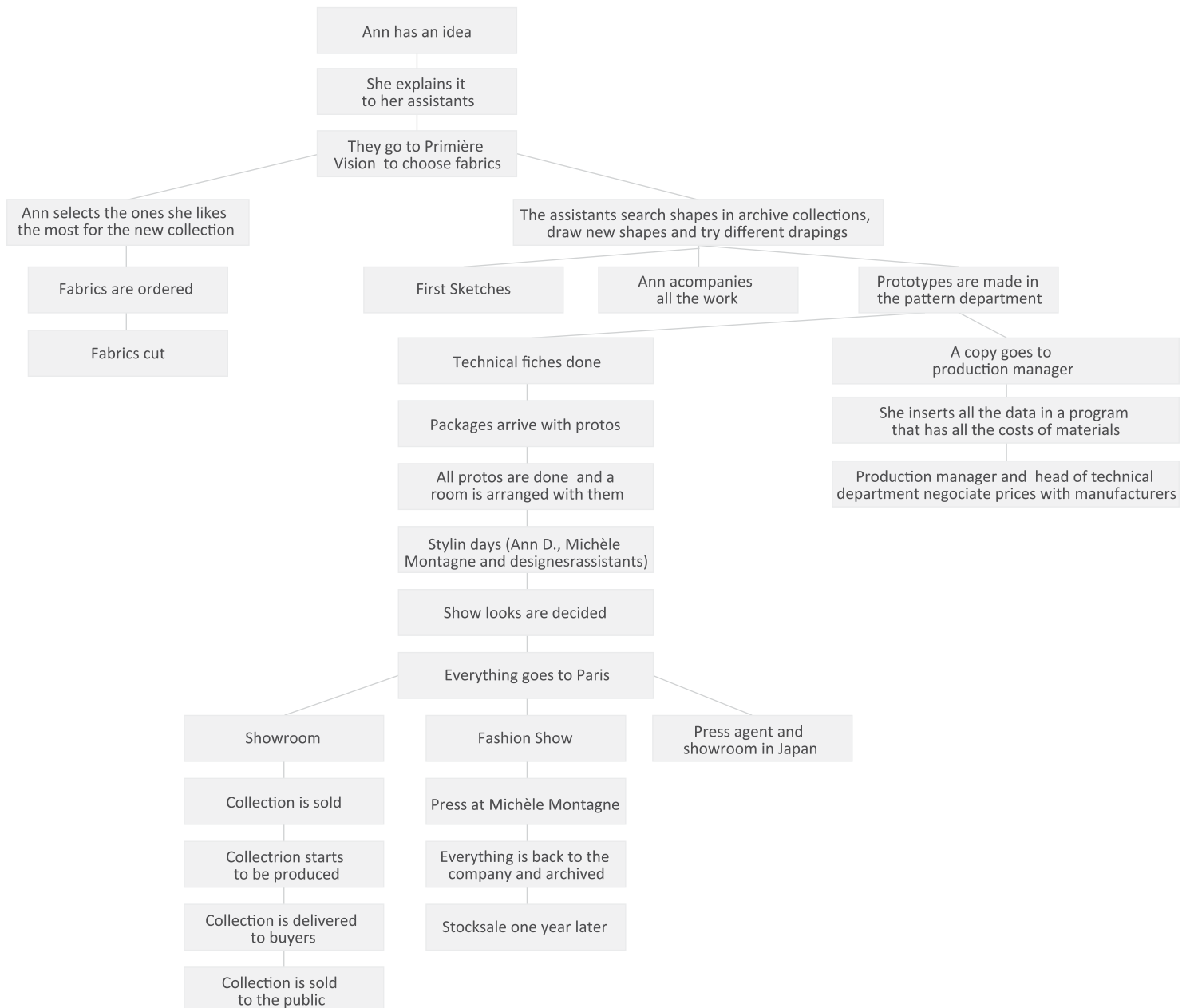


Image 122 Organogram that explains the steps taken to produce an Ann Demeulemeester's collection

The circular diagram below (Image 123) explains, in a very simple way, the movement of Ann Demeulemeester's company throughout the year regarding Men's and Women's collections as well as the presentation and development of Collections Blanche and Grise. The text that follows meticulously describes the development of a Women's or Men's collection, considering all the stages referred in the organogram (Image 84) present on the previous page.



Image 123 Ann Demeulemeester's collections' cycle.

An Ann Demeulemeester Women's collection starts with one or various ideas that can be new or old, it can be material or immaterial, a mood, a question, a muse, a period of time, as explained in the chapter Working Methods and Inspirations (pages 26 to 37). These ideas are explained to her assistants who then go to the famous textile fair *Première Vision*, in Paris, to choose samples they feel that fit the briefing Ann gave them. After this, Ann chooses from this selection all the fabrics that will be in the next collection. These fairs happen almost at the same time as the fashion shows from the previous designed collection (February and September) but because this collection is not in the hands of the assistant designers anymore, they have time to go there.

The fabrics are then ordered by the person in charge at the production manager department.

Meanwhile, the assistant designers search for new silhouettes by drawing or draping and consulting shapes from previous seasons, asking for the prototypes from those collections from the archive.

The fabrics start arriving and are all checked by somebody from the technical department, with the help of an intern. New names are given to the fabrics (like people's names, emotions, names of objects...). If there is any problem with a roll, the production department, has to be informed. These fabrics are always put on the shelves that are under the cutting tables, in the interns' atelier by order: from lighter to heavier and one of the shelves is always reserved for linings (which are basically the same from collection to collection, being color the only thing that changes the most). The rest of the fabrics are kept in a back room as reserve.

When the main drawings of a collection are decided, the collection is shown to the technical department.

It is then time to develop the patterns. As soon as everything is discussed between the assistant designers and the pattern department, the final technical drawings (that are always made by the assistant designers) and the specifications from the pattern department as well as the final patterns (they also register all the amounts of fabric used in each garment) are sent to the technical department.

From this point, the technical department has the job of making the connection between the designer and her assistants and the pattern department as well as with the production department. The technical department makes the technical *fiches* (with the help of a special, custom made software) that are sent to the manufacturers with all the instructions on how to make each garment. They print the names and amounts of fabrics needed and ask the interns to cut them and fold them nicely, always in the same way and size. The technical *fiches* have a polyester bag attached to them which can be filled with the accessories by the interns. These accessories may consist in buttons, zippers, buckles, shoulder pads, various labels, hooks, ribbons, etc.

If there is a print on the fabric, the assistant designers have to decide where they want the pattern to be placed when cut, so that the print connects perfectly when the various parts of the garment are sewn together. To this end, the assistant designers place the patterns where

they want and mark the most important outlines and corners with pins. Then, if the print is too complicated, the interns have to put the print together on paper and copy the pattern on the right place. This is done so that the manufacturers don't make any mistake when laying the pattern. The fabric with the pins is folded, the original patterns and the new ones made by the interns (with the print) are put inside a folder and all the fabrics are put inside bigger polyester bags together with the ones that belong to the same style, with the technical *fiche* on top.

A box is made by the interns in the size requested by the technical department and everything is checked again. There can be no mistakes when the material to make a prototype is sent. The amounts and *metrages* of every material have to be correct. In order to prevent mistakes with the fabric when it is cut by the manufacturers, the pattern department calculates the amount of fabric needed to make a garment and always add a bit more. When the interns cut the fabrics, they also add an extra five centimeters, just in case. If the fabric is special (with prints or very expensive...) the amount of fabric cut has to be accurate and nothing more is cut. When the interns finish filling the bags according to the *fiches* (also adding previously cut samples of each fabric and linen) they copy them and place the copies on the table of the person who asked for that look. The original goes inside the bag with the respective fabrics and the copy is kept as a proof. This is done because sometimes something added at the last minute is written in pen and is not on the computer system, so it would be doubtful to send things directly from one computer to other. The technical form is like a contract that serves as evidence if either there's a mistake made by the manufacturers or on the form that was sent. This is a very important part of the process because not only it will be used to guide the making of the first proto, but it will also be kept for production. The copied form goes to the production department where the production manager inserts all the data in her software, concerning fabric *metrages* and all materials used in one garment and she creates a different file for each garment that is made (being one step ahead and opening files when she thinks the same garment will be made with other materials). This program has all the information on prices of all the materials that can be used (including labels and accessories). With it, the production department can determine the exact cost of the materials used in each garment and from this point she can negotiate with the manufacturers the price of each garment or accessory for production.

The technical department provides assistance to the manufacturers, if they have doubts about something in the technical *fiche*, and controls the timings. The prototyping phase is condensed in a short period of time and because of that, the technical department has to schedule time with the manufacturers so that they work exclusively for Ann Demeulemeester.

When the prototypes start arriving, they are checked by the respective creative department and ultimately by Ann Demeulemeester herself. If the proto turned out to be different from what they expected, the changes are made in the technical drawing, the pattern department updates the information if there is the need and the technical department updates the *fiche*, asking for new *metrages* of fabric and everything that is needed for that look.

At the same time the assistant designers are making, respectively, Collection Blanche and Grise. Because these collections are made with archive pieces and a lot of fabrics that are kept in the Unit, their process is simpler and does not depend that much on timings from suppliers, so

it can go faster than Women's and Men's collections. In this case, it is the assistant designers' responsibility to ask the *metrages* they want from the Unit and send everything including technical *fiches* and all the trims needed to make the prototypes. They can also find new manufacturers if they think they're better to produce certain types of clothes, like knitwear. These two collections always accompany the main collections, have the same briefing, and are approved during the research processes.

Two weeks before the show, everything has to be done. Of course there may be some exceptions: if a fabric arrived very late, the proto has to be done later and it will not arrive at the expected timing. There may be some delays, but the technical department, sometimes with a push from Ann Demeulemeester herself, is able to pull some strings and make the manufacturers work faster. The company is organized in a way that all the work is done some time before the show so that there is still time for final adjustments.

By this time, a lot of things still have to be done. So that the styling can start, the technical department, with the intern's help, (always) arranges the women's studio with all the prototypes for the collection. All the garments are displayed by number (first are jackets, coats, vests, trousers, shorts, skirts, shirts and blouses and finally dresses), the accessories are disposed on a table and the shoes are put on top of boxes, also per style.

During the styling, which usually lasts for three days, the head of the technical collection team and the production manager decide the prices that every piece in the collection shall have, having all the information that was already sorted out about all the costs concerning each garment. The interns make books and finish cutting fabric swatches that will belong to the fabric books used by the sales team for the duration of the showroom.

Ann Demeulemeester (and occasionally her husband), with the help of Michèle Montagne (her friend and press agent) and her assistant designers go through the collection during the styling. They decide the show looks (everything that each model will wear during the show) as well as what's in collection and what is out. Some prototypes are excluded as they don't fit perfectly in the collection because of their shape or fabric. In the end, to transmit a strong message to the public about the collection, some of the garments are repeated in various looks. Because only one prototype is made of each garment, when a show look is decided, if it contains a repeated piece of clothing, the technical department is informed, so that the materials for that style can be sent to the manufacturer that day. In the end, normally, there is an extensive list of prototypes that have to be doubled. As soon as the new doubled *fiches* are printed and filled with accessories and labels, and the fabrics are cut, they have to be sent to the manufacturers right away. If the styling days ended on a Friday, and because there is no time to lose, if there are still materials for doubles to be sent, the technical department and the interns are asked to work on the Sunday after so that everything can be sent Monday morning. Sometimes, because at this moment, the deadlines are very short, the manufacture's owners go to Paris to deliver in hand the last garments requested for the show.

Between the Styling process and going to Paris, the technical team with the interns' help has to organize everything that has to go to the showroom, to the show and also to be sold (like in the showroom in Paris) in Japan. The fabric list is confirmed; the fabric book proposal made

by the interns is reviewed and altered by somebody in the technical department according to the definitive fabric list. The pages of this book always respect the following order: furs, leathers, stronger and heavier fabrics (usually for jackets, coats and vests), medium fabrics (for trousers, shorts and skirts), light fabrics (for shirts, blouses and dresses), light jersey to heavier jersey and light knits (for tops t-shirts, and dresses) to heavier and more structured ones (for cardigans, wraps, coats and accessories like gloves) and if there are cashmere scarves, the respective fabric swatches are usually in the end of the fabric book. The interns start pinning the pages for these books with the help of people from the Unit. When it is Men's collection presentation, there is the need to make the fabric books also for Collection Blanche and Grise. Technical drawing books are also made for the main collection and Collection Blanche. For Collection Grise, the books have both, the drawings and the fabric samples. These books are all put inside big folders, together with writing material and calculators, post-its, ... In total around thirty five folders are prepared, not only for the sales team but also for the head of the technical department, for the head of the commercial department as well as for the head of the production department. Ann Demeulemeester and Anne Chapelle also receive one. Meanwhile, there is a photo shoot with everything in the collection (or collections) that lasts a bit more than one day. When it is Women's collections, people from the technical department help dressing the model or placing the objects on a plain white table while an intern writes down the photograph number connected to the garment code. Everything is photographed, from jackets to paperweights. These photographs are given to the buyers who request them so they can put them on their websites.

The interns usually accompany the two trucks that transport all the garments and boxes to Paris and the rest of the people go by train. At this time, Ann Demeulemeester and her husband are already in Paris, at the showroom location, carrying out the casting for the models. Most part of the technical department goes to Paris as well as the production manager, and the shoes and accessories assistant designer. The designers can go earlier in order to participate in the casting or can choose to go only on the day of the show.

The arrival in Paris is usually two days before the show, so the showroom can be organized with all the pieces in the collection and so that the girls from the technical department can organize and check all the show looks and prepare them to be taken to the show location. On the day before the show, the casting is still going on and the heads of makeup and hair arrive to decide the looks they'll use. On the night before the show, everything has to be perfectly packed and done for the show: all the looks are organized and put in separate plastic bags with an elastic band around the hangers that belong to the same look; the model boards have to be done by the interns and finished by the technical department members with all the indications on how to dress each garment and with Polaroids with the general aspect of each look and close-ups on important details, the sewing machine and all the boxes with necessary tools also have to be packed.

Ann Demeulemeester shows are usually in the morning, so all the team has to be up around six o'clock. To prepare the show location before the teams (hair, makeup and catering) and models arrive. Various tables are used with a panoply of tools that can be helpful, from anti-static hairsprays and safety pins to scarves, that go on the models heads and faces to protect the makeup and hairdo while they dress as well as the clothes, and shoe horns. The catwalk

and everything around it is still being built. The clothes are placed on various racks that are disposed in a big area where the models are dressed, together with the model boards, so each model can know where to get dressed and can easily find their look or looks. Some students from a fashion school in Paris come to help dress the models. The looks are explained to the dressers by members of the technical department. Meanwhile, Ann Demeulemeester, with the help of her husband and some members of the company, goes through the catwalk, explaining the models the pace she wants them to walk in and the course they have to take by walking in front of them. Sometimes Michèle Montagne comes to help with the styling as well. Usually, the interns that are in the company longer get to dress a model who has to be changed for a second look (one in the beginning and one towards the end). The dressing has to be very fast, which sometimes is complicated if a model arrives late or if the makeup and hair takes longer. Anyway, all the models are dressed and the show starts with a little delay of something like half an hour, while the people who come to watch the show are sitting.

When the show starts and music chosen by Ann starts playing everybody keeps in complete silence. There is a television on the models way out to the runway, where Ann Demeulemeester watches the show and where the models wait for their time to go in. At the end, everybody can take a look at this television and applaud the models on their way back to the backstage. Ann Demeulemeester shows up to the public and the show is over. Some people come to the backstage to pay their compliments to Ann and her team and at the same time, glasses of champagne are distributed and while drinking a bit of champagne, everybody helps put everything back in the respective boxes and hangers. At lunch time everything is taken back to the showroom. The garments of each show look are put in the place where they belong according to their number. Everything is totally organized until the end of the afternoon. In the end of the day, there is the explanation of the main collection, and if it is Men's Collection there is also the explanation of the other collections (Blanche and Grise). At the last Women's collection (Fall/Winter 2013-14), the head of the technical department was asked to explain the garments in the collection, the shoes and accessories designer explained the shoes and accessories and the jewelry assistant designer, together with Ann Demeulemeester explained the jewelry part of the collection. On Men's collection, it should be the first assistant designer to explain the whole collection and Collection Blanche and Grise are explained by its respective assistant designers. When it comes to the pieces of clothing, because the main collections are so big, the person in charge of explaining it to the sales team chooses main examples for fabric (in the fabric book order, so the sales people can accompany the explanation), for shapes (usually an example from each style) and sizes (for example a skirt that exists in three different sizes). The interns start picking the selected garments and as the explanation goes on they show the piece the person is talking about to everybody in the sales team, who sit at various tables and take notes. In the beginning of the explanations the inspiration for the collection is also defined.

In the end the garments used during the explanation go back to where they belong, the order of everything is double checked and on the next day the showroom opens to the buyers.

The buyers have appointments with a specific sales person according to languages. There are Belgian, Italian, Spanish and Russian sales people. Normally, the Belgian sales people are the ones that meet with buyers from English speaking countries. They have to explain the mood

and inspiration that led the designer to make the collection, and show the collection in its order. However, some buyers are different and they prefer to go through the collection alone and then meet with the sales person, or they can also be specialized, only buying specific kinds of products like shoes. The salespeople also have pricelists and they inform the clients about everything. Sometimes the buyers place their orders directly or come back to see the collection again until they decide what to buy or only order a few weeks after the showroom. When an order is closed, the production manager inserts the data on in the software, connected to the one which has all the information about all the garments and everything needed to make them and all the costs. When the orders are done, she has the amounts of each garment that has been asked for and how much fabric is needed, how many buttons, labels and whatsoever. People in her department order all the material needed for everything, so that there is a minimal loss of money when ordering and producing. To have the most personalized and attentive service, Ann Demeulemeester produces a style even if there is only an order for one piece.

There are usually four models in the fitting room known as *cabine*. While choosing what to buy, the buyers ask the sales person assigned to them to request a model to try what they want, in order to see how the garments fit. In Women's collections, there are two girls from the technical department dressing the models and controlling three interns and during Men's collection, Collection Blanche and Collection Grise, there are two girls from the technical department and the second assistant designer for Men's in the *cabine* and two interns supervised by them. While the people in the fitting room dress the models and create new looks when there's a free model, the interns have to hang all the clothes in the correct way and put them back in the right order. At this time, the team is so familiarized with the names of the fabrics and codes of the garments that the work can only be truly efficient.

On the last days of showroom there are some buyers who request a photo shoot time so that they can make their own catalogue and don't have to wait until the collection is delivered to their shops (this happens with online shops). They bring their equipment and sometimes their own model. When they don't have their own model, they ask for a model working in the showroom to participate in the photo shoot. The pieces ordered by these clients are organized on racks by the girls from the technical department working in the fitting room and the by the interns.

On the last day of the showroom, the truck drivers come back to help pack everything and with the help of the interns and the *cabine* girls they load the trucks on the next day. Before going to Antwerp, they stop at Michèle Montagne to deliver the show looks and everything she chose from the collection, which is usually a lot. From then, the interns and truck drivers receive all the clothes the press agent requested from the previous collection. Usually the interns also go back by truck but sometimes they can also go by train with the technical department girls.

Ann Demeulemeester does not stay for the showroom but the project manager takes care of the public relations work, talking with the buyers, listening to their opinions, suggestions and requests, advising them and interceding for them. Loyal customers often ask for remakes of iconic garments, which is possible, depending on the quantities asked for.

Back in Antwerp, a mini showroom is organized, by the technical department and the interns, only for the people who work in the company. Here, everyone can make their own personal order which goes directly to the production manager.

The interns' office is cleaned to receive the new collection and all the clothes that came from Michèle Montagne have to be archived again.

The orders of materials are done and production can start from this point on. Here, the commercial department takes part in dealing with costumers. At the Unit, sometimes with the help of the interns and other people in the company, they start sorting out everything for each customer, as soon as things start arriving. Until now, they also worked for Haider Ackermann's collections.

When the orders start arriving at the shops, it is the commercial department's job to go to them and explain the whole collection in detail to the salespeople. At this time, a new collection is being produced.

Because the archive space isn't big enough and a lot of times there are doubled pieces, colors and prototypes that were excluded from the collections and therefore are not needed, the head of the technical department and Ann Demeulemeester go through the collection a year after it has been sold at stores. All the garments and shoes that were on the show are put aside previously, because all the show looks are always kept in the archives. Everything that Ann Demeulemeester thinks is not needed anymore goes to the stock sale. This stock sale happens twice a year and until now there were Ann and Haider's collections sold at lower prices. When the garments are not sold at the stock sale, they are sold at an even lower price during the following year. Fabrics that are not needed anymore are also sold at very low prices and students always get two extra meters from each fabric they buy, for free.

TASKS ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE INTERNSHIP

During the internship, there was the need to fulfill a lot of different tasks and develop new competencies such as to:

Cut fabrics to make prototypes, attach various things such as buttons, shoulder pads, labels to the technical form according to what is asked for;

Register all the *metrages* used;

Cut around thirty five perfect swatches (3,5 cm x 5 cm) of every material used in the collection as well as one A4 swatch, always respecting the fabric direction;

Prepare the fabric books, manually (where the swatches were pinned later on);

Make a fabric book proposal (to be approved during the styling process);

Organize the pages in all of the drawing books;

Cut fabric pieces to protect jewelry inside boxes;

Archive garments;

Search for requested garments on both archives for the designers, always writing down what was taken;

Confirm the existing stock (fabrics, leathers, buttons, accessories ...) by sorting out and counting particular amounts of accessories, calculating the existent square feet of each type of leather, checking all the amounts of linings;

Weigh everything from Collection Blanche's latest collection (garments, shoes, accessories) for shipping information;

Archive A4 swatches in their right folders, according to the fabric books;

Help with folding and packing invitations for the show and for the stock sale;

Create a new and definitive folder that consisted in cutting all the drawings from the collections and placing them in a new page with the respective price;

Make (select, cut, resize, and cut again) all the stickers with the fabric names and codes and its respective washing labels to stick on every A4 swatch;

Unpack new prototypes and organize them according to the explanations received;

Prepare a folder for each person in the sales team, to use during the showroom time, with writing materials, a fabric book from each collection, a look book and a fabric book from each collection. Around 35 folders are prepared;

During the photo shoot of the collection, maintain the collection list synchronized with the photograph number so that the photographer can name the photo with the right code with zero mistakes;

Pack all the garments, as well as all sorts of “tools” like: sewing machine, iron, ironing table, various sprays (against static, for hair and clothes), make-up scarves, underwear, writing material, hangers, sewing material, different sized ribbons, first aid kit, ... ;

Accompany one of the trucks to Paris so that the process of unloading is fast and efficient;

Replace all the hangers from plastic to wooden ones, while in the showroom;

Store all the boxes that are not needed in a little storage room;

Unpack all shoes and accessories;

Make the model boards;

Help check if all the looks are complete and pack them in the evening before the show;

Organize the backstage with all of the looks and other materials brought by the truck from the showroom to the show location;

Place, and in the end double check if all the looks are next to the respective model boards, and all the boxes with handy material on a table in a very organized way;

Understand how the look or looks worked and how to help the people around;

Make sure that all the models were ready on time to start the show and that the clothes were in perfect conditions;

As soon as the show was over, help pack everything again and put everything back on its place at the showroom;

Show the garments, during the explanation of the collection to the salespeople;

Help dress the model who's showing what garments look like when worn, to the salespeople;

Organize all the garments in the correct way so that the sales team can find what they look for easily, following the drawing book order;

Re-hang the garments that were used by the models;

Check the whole showroom in every half hour, correcting what's wrong by organizing the clothes by code and also by color and heaviness of the fabrics in the same model;

Solve problems like sewing hems, putting a ribbon between the shoulders of a garment that was always falling, sewing buttons, not only on the showroom pieces but also sometimes on garments that the buyers were wearing;

Help out (during the interns' first time in the showroom in February) at Haider Ackermann's showroom, sewing 3 skirts from scratch;

Sort out and organize all the pieces that are going to be bought by each customer for their photo shoots in the end of showroom days;

Change everything again, on the last night of the showroom. The hangers had to be changed back to plastic ones, everything had to be put inside boxes again, so that on the next day the only thing left to do was to put everything back on the trucks;

Take the selected pieces from the collection (or collections) to Michèle Montagne's office and take back to Antwerp garments from the previous season;

Organize everything that's new and everything that came from Michèle Montagne to be placed in the archive;

Prepare the collections from two seasons ago to be checked by Ann Demeulemeester, for stock sale. Organize it and sort out everything that was in the show;

Work at the stock sale, like at the showroom, keeping the space organized and help clients in the fitting room or showing them more options;

Clean the interns' room to receive the new materials;

Search and create a list of suggestions for fabric names;

Sort the fabrics by lighter to heavier in shelves under the tables and create a folder with the names of the fabrics in pages where whoever cutted an amount of fabric could write it down;

Recreate various prints by copying them on A3 papers, taping them together in real size, then placing the paper print on top of the fabric in the exact place and, by feeling the edges, placing the patterns in their right places to be copied;

Cut and organize press articles or editorials with references to Ann Demeulemeester to be archived in folders;

Try different kinds of finishings in fabrics (kinds of stitches, interfacings ...) and make shrinkage and color loss tests;

Help the pattern department copy patterns (if the same model is made in fabric and in leather, there is the need to have two patterns because they can go to different manufacturers);

Assist the production warehouse with shipping the new collections to stores.



V REFLECTIONS



REFLECTIONS ON THE INTERNSHIP

To enroll in an internship is a completely valid way of learning more about one's field of choice. It is the possibility to experience working in a place one has always appreciated. It is also a way of experiencing and deciding what kind of jobs are preferred and which ones are rejected. It is a way, for a fashion designer apprentice, to learn how a big company works. For sure, this is not the aim of everybody studying fashion design, but because there are various different areas in fashion design, it is possible to decide what kind of internship is desired. It can be in a magazine, writing, in a manufacture, experiencing all kinds of production, in a small haute couture atelier, in a brand for the mass consumers, among other fields. It is something impossible to experience during classes; it is something one can only learn by experiencing it in loco. If it were taught in a theoretical way, nobody would realize the complexity of creating everything from scratch. Nevertheless the tools to achieve success should be given, such as real marketing lessons, how to deal with manufactures, who is needed for what, where to start, where to buy materials.

Ann Demeulemeester does not work with the media. Her collections are not advertised but because she earned her own spot and clients in the fashion industry, she can do almost whatever she wants. So, of course I didn't learn a lot about advertising but it was evident how and why Ann Demeulemeester doesn't do it. She created her own lexicon, her own line of creation that is constantly changing, but has always the same essence. And that's what makes her so successful.

Without an intern's help, the work in the company wouldn't be done or it would not be complete, in various ways. The most important tasks are obviously cutting the fabrics for the new looks and completing the technical *fiches*, so that every prototype arrives in time for the styling days. The intern's work is also essential in the archive, because otherwise, it would be a complete mess and nobody would find what they're looking for. Without the fabric books and the technical drawing books, the sales team would not learn about all the details in the collections as quick as they do and would have to always check everything (look number and fabric) on the garments, which would take them twice the time. These books are also kept for posterior consultation. The help the interns give during Paris Fashion Week is also of relevant importance since there would be nobody to keep the place tidy and completely organized.

At Ann Demeulemeester, interns have their own freedom within their tasks and their aptitude to find new things to do and to improve is valorized.

Because at this company a lot of things are still made by hand such as the fabric books, it is understandable that the company lingers on that specific way of having things done. Nonetheless it would be great if the interns could have a computer for them with the basic programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator as well as all the information from previous collections, with data protection. This would save days of work. The interns have to scan, cut, clean, resize and print and most of the times because they can't do it, they have to wait until somebody does it for them: washing labels, labels for shoe boxes, labels for clothes, pages where the prices are aligned with the respective technical drawings. These last ones in

particular consist of cutting and gluing by hand more than six hundred items on a new paper and then copying it to make the final papers, which means getting everything sticky and dirty. The software that was available was very basic (like Paint and Microsoft Word) and because all the students nowadays know how to use the new Adobe programs, somebody in the company (and this person exists) should create a new way of working, using them as a tool to improve everybody's time and the quality of what is done.

Once I was asked to cut images in one program, clean them in another one and resize them in yet another. It was possible to reduce it to two programs but still, in the end, like the previous folders with these images, everything seemed unthought-of and irregular.

For the technical drawings it is understandable that some designers prefer it drawn by hand because that is what comes out to the buyers, who see them. Although the step that follows is a waste of paper, money and time, because it consists of composing by cutting and gluing various drawings on a new paper and then copying it when it's done, when all the options could have been explored on a computer without any waste. For these kinds of documents, which will be archived in the company, it would be better if they looked perfect and clear rather than those amateur folders with no quality.

Everybody working in the technical department is always reminding the interns of how expensive the paper they buy is, however they're the first ones to waste it due to malfunctions in the copy machine that gets the paper dirty (and with every collection new books have to be made, which means about 2000 printed pages).

It is totally certain that though there may have been some delays, the interns team worked really hard and completed everything more than on time. It was proved that with a lot of organization, everything can be concluded two weeks before the show, which is very rare in the fashion industry.

A lot of the interns' time is spent in the new archive, a huge place full of racks with clothes where sometimes there are very dangerous stools and where there is dust everywhere. I cleaned it once by myself but that was not my job and a lot was left still to be cleaned. The company has two cleaning ladies and they should clean it at least every two months, not only for the health of the ones that spend a lot of time in there but as well as for the sake of all the clothes, shoes and accessories that are kept there. Also there is no deep cleaning, for example above the cupboards or the fabric roll shelves, which seems a bit careless.

The head of the technical department or the interns supervisor should avoid rumors that spread from intern to intern. Not only a lot of surprises are spoiled but things like having days off are talked about by them. Because the system is different in every country it should be clear for everybody interning there what are their rights and duties.

Concerning the company's working methods, of course there will always be some remarks regarding the way things work when they have been done in almost the same way for more than two decades. But it is understandable that a lot of work that was done various times like pinning swatches to paper or making other things by hand has to be done like that because it is part of the brand's essence.

From this experience, I am sure to have absorbed the most important knowledge that will surely serve as a guide (with some alterations, adapted to the new technologies, probably) to build my own brand from scratch.

It was the best opportunity had until now and it is already a boost for my career as it has given me the confidence to get things done, ensured about women's power and made me adapt to a new culture and mingle with locals. Personally, this experience has surely more value than a normal Erasmus experience because here, there was the opportunity to really learn something new, something out of the box. Things that would have taken years to learn were exposed to me in exchange for my collaboration. It was a really rewarding experience at all levels and a fresh opportunity to see how honorable and dear an apparently "big monster" of fashion is. Ann Demeulemeester is definitely different from all the stories told by students about internships and being exploited without learning anything. It was the most important experience I've had until now.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MASTER'S DEGREE

As opposed to what was expected, having knowledge of techniques like using Adobe software and having sewing skills and knowledge about materials, are not as important as being competent in what is expected about an intern. In this particular case, the company didn't use a lot of technology because it privileges what is handmade. With this experience, she can know what system she prefers and try her own way, but without experiencing already consolidated methods (that really work), no one can know better.

The Master's program in Fashion Design (Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade de Lisboa) was not what I had expected because it was experienced a tumultuous period in the University's system that led to not learning what she wanted and feeling defeated by the lack of organization she lived in.

This was an opportunity to understand that to enroll in a Master's Degree should be something done consciously. Considering that the Master Degree is not obligatory after the Undergraduate level in the same area, students should have at least one professional experience to let them decide, if this step makes sense. Without experiencing working in the area, nobody knows their own potential. Maybe if I had done the internship right after graduating from her BA, she would feel confidence enough to try to find a job in the area.

Having experienced the work in a company changed my mind about the validity of what was previously learnt. Of course that some of the skills obtained during the Undergraduate level and Master Degree were used, but very important practical and theoretical things were learnt there due to a constant contact with the industry. The students are taught about how to make a technical form but they don't know how everything else works, who gives all the information on how to build a garment? Who draws the technical drawing? Who adds all the accessories and fabrics to it? Is it sent by e-mail or paper? They know how to make technical drawings but they don't know what else is needed in the technical part of a collection. Who buys the fabrics, who has them and where are they? Who makes what? It is extremely essential to know these kinds of things because without them, it is impossible to start a business or to work for other people in a successful way. An internship is an authentic and valuable asset that shows that somebody is interested in learning more about the reality of a fashion company and reveals their personal taste in their resume.

It is extremely important to know that one should have their own identity and not follow others' opinions to create it. This is something that is not very explored at school. The students are directed to a lot of different assignments where they can show their adaptability and versatility but that is as important as finding a personal taste that shows in different assignments, which are usually destined to the last year students. That is not time enough to do it. Students have to open their minds to new fashion designers, to new ways of creating. Considering that the courses don't have time enough and all the practical work should be assisted and supervised, the students should start to learn how to sew and make pattern designs in their first year so they can start creating on their own from the beginning.

Concerning my preparation for this internship, my biggest flaw consisted in the lack of preparation regarding the use of technical expressions in a different language. It was attempted to sign up for an optional course in Technical English as an undergraduate which was attended for two weeks before changing to another optional course, because the teacher refused to give different assignments to fashion design students (it was only focused in architecture).

Following the last subject, another thing that should be learnt is what to write exactly on the technical remarks on how to make a garment; the students learn a bit of how to make clothes but most of them start to give their work to somebody who knows better and the expressions and technical vocabulary are definitely more practical and useful than learning the chemical components in fibers and the names of silkworms. It is more important to study how the fabrics drape, what can be done with each type of fabric (always concerning the materials, of course) than learning about hospital materials for smocks and gloves. That information is only valuable for those who want to enroll in a fabric engineering course. For fashion design, all the practical knowledge is much more valuable and in the end, the students proceed on choosing fabrics that they don't know how to work with and how to use them because their experience is only theoretical.

Of course it is impossible to learn everything at once, but having learnt about how other universities work in different countries, after talking with the five interns at Ann Demeulemeester, it seems possible to learn more than what is taught now, to obtain more skills, to be pushed to work harder. All of them were obliged to intern for a semester. If these courses are not long enough, at least, internships should be promoted by this specific University, as normal Erasmus programs are promoted.

Because there are so many fields within fashion, there was the curiosity to learn more about other subjects like styling or writing about fashion but she was told that the Fashion Design course was exclusively dedicated to fashion design. There were drawing classes for two years, drawing by observation and model drawing and fashion illustration. But if the course is directed to fashion design it is only important that the students learn how to draw something understandable and mainly have the know-how to make technical drawings. At Ann Demeulemeester, the only legitimate drawings, although made by hand, were the technical drawings. Even if they're not incredibly perfect, at least, they're totally understandable.

Until seeing how a company is structured and what the tasks set for each department are, a student can't know how to start a business. There are no subjects, on the BA or Master's degree in Fashion that teach and guide the student on how a business works, what to do to start a company, what is needed and there are no valuable contacts in the industry. After sharing this opinion with a lot of students from both courses, it became clear that a list of valuable contacts is essential considering that the university does not have enough means, like a dying and printing atelier, a showroom and a hired professional photographer, for example. It would be a valuable asset for all the students because most of them have few or no contacts at all concerning manufacturers, specialized suppliers, seamstresses, photographers, internship opportunities, etc. It could be a simple website consisting on a database which would be controlled and updated by the teachers with the students' help.

Without having any remarkable grades in both higher education courses that I was affiliated with, I was able to do an internship in one of the top fashion companies of the current times. That has to mean that my value beyond academia is higher than what I supposed and that it is me, the one who builds and promotes my work and the ways to show it. Maybe I'm one in a few that has the power to start things on my own but not everybody is like this and all the students should receive as much intellectual and practical tools as well as guidance as possible to start working in their election area successfully.

Hearing about what the curricular plan was before Bologna Process is heart breaking, because now, without time, how can a student be prepared to face real life? I have to conclude that my level of discontentment is not specifically directed to the University itself, because a lot of professors and assistants have been also transmitting their negativity towards the new academic system to the students by different means (from not coming to classes, to looking after students' works carelessly). It is important that the system adapt to the new needs with positivity and energy.

A dark gray diagonal shape that starts from the top-left corner and extends towards the bottom-right, creating a split background effect.

VI ~~CONCLUSIONS~~

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This work represents a deep research about Ann Demeulemeester (until now BVBA 32), as a result not only of theoretical research but mainly of a day-to-day working experience. From that, it was reflected along the way until the end, concluding that an internship like the one she did is an essential learning stage for somebody studying in a practical course. My only regret is that this was not on my option range after concluding the Undergraduate level, due to a lack of confidence.

With this experience, a lot of benefits came along, mainly at a personal level. But this work and what comes from it will benefit a lot of students who have thought about doing an internship and also those who didn't yet think of it. It is proof that a top experience like the one presented here is accessible for those who really want to learn, to improve skills and to reach the next level of independency.

I was able to experience the making of several collections in their whole, which provided a lot of knowledge, skills, and a general know-how considering most of the processes. It is now a precious asset on my curriculum not only because it will be included in the list of my experiences but it was also obtained a recommendation letter.

It is no longer felt a lack at an educational level and I'm finally prepared to detach myself from the educational institution.

I feel prepared and eager to apply my newly achieved skills and knowledge to a new project, which has actually already started.

New opportunities are open for the next students in the master's degree and hopefully for newly graduated students from Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade de Lisboa. Students who are interested in doing an internship can follow the present work as a guide for their own internships and as an example for what to expect.

It is very important to make it totally clear that this experience and all the knowledge that came from it depended mostly on a craving and curiosity to learn more. One must also possess a personal ability to adapt to a new work context, to a new culture, to work in groups, to deliver work on time and to have a great sense of respect and responsibility.

An internship is the ultimate training to reach a good level of capacities that will surely prepare people for reality, outside university's safe zone. It is finally, an excellent opportunity to meet people with similar interests with different backgrounds and most of them, with more experience than the person who's interning. Meeting these people may be an advantage in the future and the contact must be maintained. They will enrich a constantly changing list of people in the area. And a lot of new things may come from them, such as work opportunities, partnerships or possibilities to show work in different places and countries, among others.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the intermediate presentations, and because this format of concluding a Master Degree in Fashion Design has no precedence, there will be the available to disseminate this experience to students and teachers of courses in Fashion Design in the same university that I'm enrolled in, not only through the purveyance of this report at the University's library but also through participation in seminars or lectures.

This internship will also be present in my online portfolio (<http://teresamineiro.wordpress.com/>).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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